

# The Disciplers' Method



**W**hen I lead Sunday School conferences for churches or associational meetings, and I finish explaining the elements of the Model in Chapter One, a common reaction of teachers goes something like this: I really like the idea of the Disciplers' Model, but how can I do all this in thirty minutes a week!?

Good question! How can we do all that the Model describes when we have such a limited amount of teaching time? Paul cautioned us

*Look carefully then how you walk, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Eph5:15-16*

The Amplified New Testament renders the phrase "redeeming the time" this way: "Making the most of the time--buying up each opportunity . . . ." How do we make the most of our time in Sunday morning Bible study? How do we buy up each opportunity for Bible study that transforms the lives of teachers as well as learners? Chapter Two answers these questions in the following six sections:

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## TEACHING METHODS

### Regardless of Method...

Methods of teaching are ways of managing learning experiences in order to secure change in a learner's knowledge, understanding, personal response or purposeful action. Follow these suggestions, regardless of the method you use, to 'redeem the time' for your teaching,

#### *Focus on student learning*

Emphasize what learners will do during the Bible study. Plan methods that will help your learners hit your teaching target.

#### *Teach for more than mere content*

Teaching involves living spirit, kindling interest, stimulating thought, stirring imagination, creating ideas, and helping members express their learning in action.

#### *Focus on learner attitudes*

Attitudes and values endure throughout life. Learners quickly forget obscure facts that do not relate to their lives. It is much easier to "tell the facts" than convey proper attitudes, but facts evaporate and attitudes remain.

#### *Be patient and show a desire to help*

Avoid derogatory or sarcastic behavior toward students. This breeds humiliation, fear, and sometimes hate toward teacher and the subject. God didn't create us for the Bible. He gave the Bible to help us. Love your students. Help them learn.

### *Focus on solving problems*

Use the biblical content to deal with issues related to learner needs. Don't teach merely to "get across" material. Your students will soon forget most of the content you "get across" unless you help them use the material. Skills in using the Bible to solve real problems endure.

### Variety of Method

Teaching is too complex a process to depend solely on a single method. 'Redeeming the time' requires the use of a combination of methods. The foundation stones of the model call for variety in teaching. The approach you choose should fit the Bible passage as well as the needs of the learners sitting in your class.

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## *Redeem the time by mastering the essential teaching approaches: Conversational lecture, Discussion, and Question & Answer*

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### *Conversational lecture*

Lecture is the most common teaching method. Yet when I ask classes to list their teaching method preferences, most will invariably list "lecture" near the bottom. When I ask for specific reasons for this response, I usually receive a barrage of experiences with bad lectures: unprepared lecturers, rambling organization, poor platform skills, lack of application to "real life," and a monotone delivery.

If you want to be a good lecturer, present your material in a **well-organized**, clear manner. Use language, style, pace, and vocabulary that is **appropriate for your learners**. Cultivate a friendly conversational tone that draws your learners into your thoughts. Avoid tangential ideas or thoughts that lead the class away from your main flow of thought. **Relate your material to past and future** studies by reviewing key ideas discussed in the past and previewing how "today's" session will help your learners later. Review the main ideas in your material at the lecture's conclusion.

**Advantages.** There really are several advantages in using the lecture method. It is the most **efficient** for conveying the teacher's knowledge, convictions, and experiences in a given period of time. Lecture is **less threatening** than other methods for some learners because it is "safe to listen." The lecture method is the only really viable approach for teaching classes larger than thirty. It is the best approach to **display the teacher's rich experience and knowledge** in the field. The class is less likely to become sidetracked into minor issues. **Reinforcement** of key ideas can be controlled by the teacher's intensity, logic, humor and clarity. The **content can be !brought to life!** by the enthusiasm and warmth of the teacher.

**Disadvantages.** But there are also disadvantages in using lecture that you must overcome. There may be little or no interaction between teacher and learner. Lecturing can be a **one-way process**. There is **no interaction** among learners. A single lecturer cannot speak to the varied needs of all the learners at the same time. Lecture requires teachers with polished **public speaking skills** that are possessed by relatively few.



**Teach while you talk!** Use a “conversational” approach to lecture to emphasize the advantages of the method and minimize the disadvantages. Punctuate your lecture with questions. Call for comments from the class, or ask learners to discuss examples of the ideas you’ve presented.

Use visual aids to improve your lectures. My favorite visual medium is a “living chalkboard.” I teach with a piece of chalk in my hand. I build visual images on the board as the lecture proceeds. These changing visual images reinforce the aural-mental images that I convey with my words. This dynamic, growing, changing “living chalkboard” is far better than a static chalkboard, filled with a detailed outline at the beginning of class. Flip charts, maps, charts, posters and overhead transparencies help learners visualize the words of the lecturer.

### *Discussion*

A discussion is an orderly conversation among learners that moves the class toward your teaching target. Group discussion is less popular today than it was during the Encounter Era of the late 1960’s and 1970’s. Abuse of discussion by teachers who were

unprepared to teach--“Let’s open to I Corinthians 13 and see what the Lord lays on your heart”--has all but killed interest in this approach.

**Advantages.** There are several advantages to using the discussion approach. It helps learners become **participants in learning** rather than passive receivers. It helps learners to **organize** their own learning. Discussion provides the best way to help your learners **interact with each other**. The free-wheeling give-and-take among learners can uncover misunderstandings and **clarify ideas** in a way that no other method can. This approach allows the teacher to become part of the group, rather than remain above it as lecturer or question-asker. This helps tear down barriers between teacher and taught, which **personalizes the session**. Learners **learn to listen to each other** better.

**Disadvantages.** There are disadvantages as well. Talkative, dominating learners can quickly **frustrate a class** who would rather hear the teacher. Discussion is ineffective when you must deal with **difficult or unfamiliar content**, such as Books of Hosea or Jude. Discussion **takes more time** than a

comparable lecture. If your time is limited, don't start a discussion.

**Teach while you discuss.** Still, you can do so much good in a Christian context by using discussion techniques from time to time. Start with a **common group experience**: a reaction to a quotation, an analysis of a case study, or a report on an assignment.

As the group members share their reactions and opinions, **ask questions** to direct the course of discussion. **Intervene** when discussion moves off course so that the group moves toward the session objective. Your intention in using discussion should be to **enable learners to share their answers**, not to express their own. You need a good general knowledge of the subject.

Develop a **"comfortable" atmosphere** in your classroom. Help learners to become acquainted with each other. Set the example by being friendly, tactful, courteous, and patient in and out of class. Be a **good listener**. Arrange the class in a **semi-circle or circle** so that learners can see each other easily.

Address questions to the **whole group** rather than to individuals. **Show appreciation** for each member's contribution to the class. Do not harshly reject learners' statements you consider incorrect. Rather, **ask questions** to direct the discussion to the correct response. Or better yet, **let the class evaluate** comments by saying, "Have you had this experience?" or "Do you agree?" or "Are there other thoughts on this?" Encourage more **interaction among learners** and less teacher-learner dialogue. Bring in alternative ideas and perspectives to keep the discussion balanced.

Use **personal examples** or good illustrations

to keep discussion informal. **Develop a cooperative spirit** in the class. Be fair yet firm. Clarify problems. State questions, case studies, and problems clearly. **Avoid "fuzzy" explanations** and definitions. Ask questions or pose problems in a way that focuses discussion. For example, this question is too broad. It does not focus discussion sufficiently.

"What is the most exciting experience you've ever had?"

The following question is much better.

"Think about your salvation experience. How did you find the Lord."

**Encourage participation.** Take advantage of the rich resource of experience of the group by endeavoring to involve every member in the discussion. **Avoid domination of the group.** Learner to learner questions and responses are best. Speak only to clarify, redirect, rephrase or elaborate on group answers. **Summarize frequently.** Tie together major points from time to time throughout the discussion. Let the learners participate in this summary. Strive to end the session with **spirits high** and an **increased desire for further study** and discussion.

### *Question and Answer Method*

Questions require learners to think. Since learning is directly tied to the degree learners think, the ability to ask the right question at the right time is an effective teaching tool.

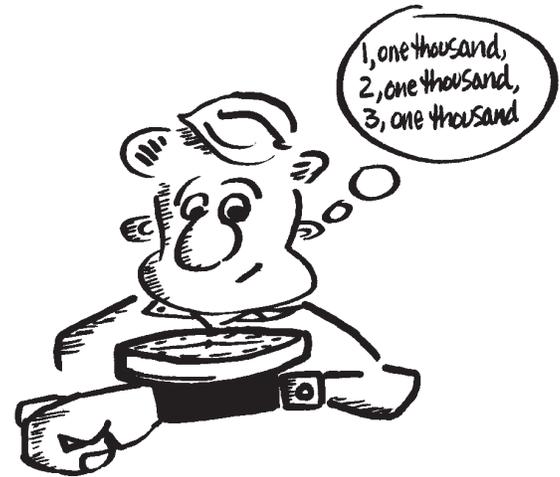
The question and answer method you ask a prescribed set of questions to test how well your learners understand the lesson content. The Q&A approach is more flexible than lecture because each question can evoke several responses and interactions. It is more

structured, however, than a free-flowing discussion, because the questions to be asked have been planned ahead of time. You will succeed with the Q&A approach to the extent you can create good questions.

**Advantages.** The question and answer method has several advantages. It allows the teacher to evaluate **learners' quality of thought**. It stimulates the **integration** of learners' experience and subject with more control and direction from the teacher than permitted by discussion. It permits a **step-by-step** inductive approach — that is, moving from real life examples to biblical truths — to new material. It **reveals the misconceptions and misunderstandings** of learners. And finally, the question and answer method helps **build rapport** between leader and learners.

**Disadvantages.** The disadvantages of question and answer include such things as these. It permits **little or no interaction** among learners. Some questions **threaten** learners, and this hinders learning. The question and answer approach can become  **boring** if questions are too easy. The practice of merely asking questions falls short of good definition of teaching. The asking of questions **cannot provide knowledge** the learner doesn't have. And, finally, the question and answer method presents the danger of leading learners to make **mechanical**, unthinking, responses.

**Ask good questions.** The Q&A approach will succeed or fail depending on the quality of the questions you ask. Good questions **make sense to students**. They are **logical** rather than confusing. **Direct** rather vague. **Clear** rather than muddled. Questions should be easy to understand and a challenge to answer. That is, the difficulty of a question should not be in its technical jar-



gon, stilted language, or complicated grammar. Adapt your questions to the experience level of your learners. Avoid questions that call for “pat” answers. Good questions do not suggest their own answers. **Avoid leading or rhetorical questions.** “Do you see that Paul is saying here that. . . ?”

**Time out!** Give your learners enough time to answer your questions. Craig Pearson conducted research in 1980 on the amount of time teachers waited for students to answer their questions.\* The average length of time was **0.9 seconds!** Teachers were instructed to wait three seconds after asking a question by counting “1-one-thousand, 2-one-thousand, 3-one-thousand.” The behavior of the students changed significantly in the following ways:

- **Student answers were longer.** This means that the learners had more to say when they were given time to think.
- **More students volunteered answers.** Learners were more confident in what they knew, and were willing to share it more.
- **Fewer students failed to respond.** More learners had something to say than before.

\*“Can You Keep Quiet For Three Seconds?” LEARNING: The Magazine for Creative Teachers, Vol. 1, Number 6 (Palo Alto, California: Education Today, February, 1980)

- **Students inflected fewer answers.** Fewer answers had a "?" on the end, such as "Jesus?" as an answer to a question.
- **Students worked together more.** Participation and sharing increased.
- **Students inferred more from what they knew.** Quality of thinking improved.
- **More children asked questions.** Curiosity and motivation increased.
- **Learners generated questions of their own.** Learners thought at a higher level.
- **"Slow" students increased response rate.** The "slower" students participated more.

So, when you ask your class a question, give them **time!** to interpret your meaning, form an answer, and respond in a clear and logical manner. By doing this, you increase the impact of your questions. By investing teaching time in learner thinking, reflecting, and analyzing, you 'redeem the time' in the quality of learning.

The Q&A method is a wonderful blend of lecture and discussion. It provides more structure than discussion and more flexibility than lecture. Yet it allows for interaction among learners, and reasonable control by the teacher.

So as you can see, no one approach can do everything that needs doing for a discipling approach to Bible study. I have only touched the surface of possible teaching methods that you can use. But whatever method you choose, choose one that is appropriate to the **learner**, the assigned **content**, the **session objective**, your skills as a **teacher**, and the

type of **facilities** you have to work with.

### Focus on Central Methods

We have emphasized three major methods of teaching: conversational lecture, discussion, and question-and-answer. We have intentionally avoided the often discussed but seldom used methods. These include the panel, forum, debate, listening team, role play, and drama. The Three cover the majority of teaching situations. Master these and you will quickly develop a reputation of an outstanding teacher. The special methods are effective in small doses, but require far more time and effort to do well than the three we've discussed.

## THE LESSON PLAN

A lesson plan reflects the care and planning that a teacher has made, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, for what will happen in a particular Bible study session. During planning, teachers open themselves to the Word of God and the illumination of God over a period of time. The teacher who merely "fills time" on Sunday morning without a clear vision of where he is taking the class will waste a great deal of that time. Redeeming the Time for Bible Study requires careful and prayerful planning. Let's examine five key ingredients to an effective lesson plan:

Aim to learn	<b>Objective Learning Readiness</b>
Prepare to learn	
Proceed to learn	<b>Bible Study</b>
Review learning	
Transfer learning	<b>Conclusion Assignment</b>

# 1. OBJECTIVE

## "Set Up Targets"

When I was a boy, my parents gave me a bow and arrow set for Christmas. We were living in El Paso, Texas at the time, so I was able to get an immediate start on my bow-and-arrow skills. I set up a cardboard box with a target in front of the stone fence that went around our backyard. I took careful aim and fired my first arrow. I missed the target. I missed the box -- and I hit the fence! My arrow split right down the middle.

### *Aimless Shooting*

Since I only had two arrows left, I decided against shooting at the target. So I made up a new game. I stood in the middle of the yard and fired my arrow straight up. Keeping my eye on the arrow, I moved myself under it -- following the wind currents that pushed it one way and then another. The arrow would

<b>Objective</b>
<b>Learning Readiness</b>
<b>Bible Study</b>
<b>Conclusion Assignment</b>

stall, and then turn and fall back to earth, straight toward me. The object of my game was to see how close to my foot I could get the arrow to land. It was great fun (until my mother saw what I was doing and put an end to my game), but the sad thing was that I never learned how to shoot an arrow and hit a target.

### *Aimless Teaching*

Years later I would discover -- much to my dismay -- that I was teaching Bible studies much the same way. I would "fire" the Bible out to my class, let "The Wind" carry it wherever "He wills," and then be glad for whatever happened. My teaching was as aimless as my bow-and-arrow game, and there was no way it could improve. There were no guidelines by which to evaluate it.

### *Targeted Teaching*

Instructional objectives "target" your teaching. This target gives you something concrete to aim for--a place to end up--at the

Let's see...  
I'll just shoot  
my arrow  
up in the air....



Now how d'ya expect he'll ever learn to hit anything that aways??

...and wherever  
it lands  
will be fine!

conclusion of the session. Consider a family who spends their two-week vacation aimlessly driving from place to place. They have no idea where they will be during the two weeks, nor how far they will go, nor what they will see. The goal for the trip is nothing more than to spend two weeks on the road. Granted, they will stumble into some interesting experiences. There may even be some excitement in choosing from moment to moment what direction they'll travel. But they will also waste a lot of valuable time.

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### *Redeem the time by knowing where you're going as you teach.*

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Consider a second family who decides to spend their vacation in Orlando, Florida. Given their destination and the length of their vacation, they have already reduced a lot of wasted time. Detailed planning will fill the gaps of what to do and see on the way to Orlando and back. But the setting up of the target 'redeems the time' for what they want to do.

It is the same with teaching. When you set up a target to hit during a class session, you avoid a lot of aimless talk. Detailed lesson planning will fill in the gaps with what you will do during the session, but the mere setting up of an instructional target clarifies your purpose. You have already begun to 'redeem the time.'

#### **Learners Most Important**

An instructional target underscores the importance of the learner. The learner is the most important ingredient in the Bible teaching-learning process. The Pharisees of Jesus'

day put the observance of the Sabbath above the people who observed it. They criticized Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, because healing is work and work is forbidden on the Sabbath. But Jesus put the observer above the observance: "The Sabbath was made on account and for the sake of man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27, Amplified). The learner is the key ingredient in the learning experience. What will the learner be able to do at the end of your teaching that he could not do before? What impact will you make on the individuals sitting in your class? How have they been changed? In writing an instructional objective, you are planning ahead of time, with prayerful dependence upon the Lord to lead you, what your learners should get from your teaching.

#### **Type of Learning Desired**

Instructional targets differ according to the emphasis you desire in a given lesson. We can identify four major emphases in teaching: knowledge, understanding, personal response, and purposeful action.

##### *Knowledge*

Knowledge refers to the learner's ability to identify or recall information that he has been given. The learner will demonstrate his knowledge of...

...John 3:16 by quoting it from memory.

...Paul's first missionary journey by identifying from a list of Asian cities the names of the cities he visited.

##### *Understanding*

Understanding refers to the learner's ability to explain, illustrate, or describe--in his own words--biblical concepts or principles that he has studied. The learner who understands has moved beyond the words and grasped

the meaning of the words. The learner will demonstrate his understanding of...

...John 3:16 by explaining in his own words the terms “loved the world,” “believeth in Him,” and “everlasting life.”

...the Armor of God (Ephesians 6) by explaining how truth is a “belt,” salvation is a “helmet,” faith is a “shield,” and the Word of God a “sword.”

The outcomes of knowledge and understanding belong to the Left Pillar of the Model.

**Personal Response**

Personal response refers to the learner’s willingness to share a personal experience or opinion related to the topic being discussed. The learner will demonstrate his appreciation for...

...Paul’s missionary journey by sharing an experience in missions with the class.

...John 3:16 by giving a testimony in class about his life before and after he was saved.

The personal response outcome belongs to the Right Pillar of the Model, and helps learners ‘remove their masks.’

**Purposeful Action**

Purposeful action refers to the learner’s ability to solve problems in class or put what he has learned into practice during the week. The emphasis can come either from the left or right pillars of the Model.

The learner will demonstrate his understanding of the Armor of God (Ephesians 6) by giving, in class, correct solutions to case studies involving spiritual warfare. (Prob-

lem-solving)

The learner will demonstrate his appreciation for Paul’s first missionary journey by working in one of our church’s mission projects over the next month.

The instructional objective sets the direction for the teaching session. Learning Readiness focuses the hearts and minds of learners on the subject to be studied. The proper use of learning readiness activities is an area that would **immediately** improve the quality of teaching in the church.

**2. LEARNING READINESS**

**“Priming the Pump”**

Not so very long ago, folks used manual pumps to draw water. A pitcher of water was poured into the pump to secure the seal. This would provide enough suction to lift the water out of the ground and into whatever container they had. Without “priming,” the manual pump could not begin to draw water.

<b>Objective Learning Readiness</b>
<b>Bible Study</b>
<b>Conclusion Assignment</b>

*Redeem the time by preparing hearts and minds to receive a word from the Lord.*

The teacher who walks into a classroom thinking his class is ready to learn is making a dangerous assumption. The individuals seated before him have their minds on their own thing. Their hearts may or may not be

ready to focus on the things of God. Jesus said, "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs" (Mt 7:6). You may think me guilty of overkill to apply this passage to teaching in the church. But the truth remains that your class is not ready to study spiritual truth when they walk into the class. Their pumps need priming. And this is what the learning readiness section of a lesson plan does. Here are some guidelines to follow in designing learning readiness activities.

### Remember your Objective

It does not help the learning process to begin your session with a class discussion of last week's football game, or the morning's headlines (unless that discussion can lead directly into the passage being studied). Discussion for discussion's sake is not helpful. The intention of pump priming should be to focus hearts and minds on a central issue that will prepare the way for the learning activities that follow. Here are some examples drawn from the objectives we stated above.

#### Objective:

The learner will demonstrate his knowledge of Paul's first missionary journey by identifying the names of the cities he visited from a list of Asian cities.

#### Suggested Learning Readiness:

Hang a large map of the Middle East and Asia Minor on the front wall. This can be hand drawn on several sheets of newspaper. Identify each of the major cities in Asia Minor with a large dot. Have the names of the cities written in large print beside their respective dots. Be sure to include all the cities Paul visited on his first missionary journey. Then ask the class to trace the route Paul took on this first journey. (The Bible study

will retrace the route, and emphasize major events that took place on the journey.)

#### Objective:

The learner will demonstrate his understanding of John 3:16 by explaining in his own words the terms "loved the world," "believeth in Him," and "everlasting life."

#### Suggested Learning Readiness:

Write the following words on the chalkboard as learners come into class: "love," "world," "believe," "everlasting," "life." (You've already begun to focus attention.) As the class begins, ask learners to define each of these terms in light of John 3:16. (The Bible study will analyze these terms in light of John 3:16 and parallel passages.)

#### Objective:

The learner will demonstrate his appreciation for Paul's missionary journey by sharing an experience in missions with the class.

#### Suggested Learning Readiness:

Write the words "Experiences in Missions" on the chalkboard and share a personal experience you've had in a mission project or on a mission trip. Emphasize how you feel and what impact the experience had on your life. (The Bible study will focus on Paul's journey and the experiences class members have had in mission work.)

#### Objective:

The learner will demonstrate his understanding of the Armor of God (Ephesians 6) by giving, in class, correct solutions to case studies involving spiritual warfare. (Problem-solving)

#### Suggested Learning Readiness:

Write the following words on individual pieces of blue poster board: "belt," breast-

plate," "shoes," "shield," "helmet," and "sword." Write these words on pieces of yellow poster board: "truth," "righteousness," "gospel," "faith," "salvation," "Word of God." Tape these words randomly on the front wall of the classroom. At the beginning of class, have learners match them up. (The Bible study will focus on the meanings of the pieces of spiritual armor.)

### Avoid gimmicks

Avoid gimmicks that might shock, frighten or offend learners. You will certainly get attention by using sudden loud noises (firecrackers, air horns), rude comments, abusive remarks, or embarrassing skits. Youth ministers seem particularly fond of such tactics. But shock will do more to disrupt learning than enhance it.

### Build a Bridge to Bible Study

Plan carefully for the transition from the learning readiness to Bible study. The learning readiness section should lead naturally into the study portion of the teaching plan. If the pump has been primed correctly, your learners will be eager to get into the Scripture to find answers, clarify meanings, or share the experiences of Bible personalities. In just a few moments, you have focused the attention of your class on the very issues you've targeted. You've made a major step toward "buying up the opportunity" you've been given to teach.

## 3. BIBLE STUDY

### "Hauling the Freight"

During my teenage years I had a friend you spent the weekends polishing his candy-apple-red pickup truck. Chrome-plated dual

Objective
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exhausts. Mag wheels. Wide tires. One day I made the mistake of asking him how much it could carry. "Carry??!" he shrieked. "I don't carry anything in this truck. It's for show!" He was offended at my lack of understanding. Well, excuse me. I thought pickup trucks were meant to be used to haul cargo.

It is amazing to me how many teachers--professional and volunteer--polish their trucks and ignore the freight. They give years to gathering information, and minutes to planning how to teach effectively. For these individuals, teaching is nothing more than telling what they know. "The more one knows, the better teacher he is." This viewpoint yields nothing more than a polished truck. The essence of teaching is conveying experience, understanding and attitude to learners in a way that changes their lives. This is the freight.

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*Redeem the time*  
by  
**"rightly dividing the Word of Truth"**

**Organize your teaching to maximize learning.**

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If you want to 'redeem the time' for Bible study that changes lives, focus on hauling freight. Let's consider how to organize the Bible study section and what teaching methods are most appropriate.

### Organization

Organization of the Bible study section can take one of several general forms. Let's consider verse-by-verse study, group study, key

concepts study, and personal response.

### *Verse by verse study*

This organizational pattern involves explaining each verse of scripture in the assigned passage by the teacher. It is by far the most common approach in youth and adult Bible studies. Perhaps this is because the lesson commentary provides information on the passages in this way.

You must carefully stimulate and maintain the learners' interest with this approach. Otherwise the session will decay into boring recitations of monotone facts. Maintain learner interest by peppering your explanations with questions. Questions focus learner attention on the material, cause them to reflect on what you've said, and require them to invest themselves in your interpretations. If they answer correctly, you are assured that they understand what you've said. If they answer incorrectly, you can correct their misunderstandings on the spot.

In general, follow this procedure when teaching a verse-by-verse study: Explain the verse or verse fragment, ask a question about your explanation, and then correct any misunderstandings.

**Example:** The study of Paul's missionary journey could follow the verse-by-verse pattern. Trace his journey from Antioch to Asia Minor and back, verse by verse. Focus attention on each city and its associated events as you go.

### *Small Group study*

Break the class into several groups of three to five members. Give members a question or list of questions and let them study the assigned passage to find answers. This allows the Bible to speak to them as they dig

out the answers for themselves. Plan about half your teaching time for group work and half for class discussion on their answers. It is during the group discussion of questions that you will have the opportunity to clarify meanings and correct misunderstandings.

You must carefully avoid having the groups merely "pool their ignorance" -- that is, to base present answers on past learnings. Give a brief background to the passage and explain key terms ("Prime the pump") before sending the groups into the scripture to find answers.

**Example:** Read Acts 13-15 and answer the following: Who was the leader of the first missionary journey at the beginning? Who was the leader at the end? When did this change happen? Why? How did the older, established leader react to the new leader? Who deserted the team? What was the reaction of the two leaders to this "quitter"? Which of the two reacted more like you would? What key discoveries did you make in these 3 chapters?

### *Key concepts study*

This approach to Bible study organization pivots around the key ideas in an assigned passage. In Revelation 1 we have the twin pictures of Jesus as "Lord-and Judge" and Jesus as "Friend." In Galatians 5 we have a contrast between flesh-works and Spirit-fruit. Separate the related key concepts in a given passage and help learners analyze them.

**Example:** A study of Ephesians 4 could focus on verse 15: "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (NIV). Organize the Bible study section around these four concepts:

**Speaking the “truth”**

Christians should live lives of integrity

**Speaking “in love”**

Christians should live lives of mercy

**Speaking “the truth in love”**

A fusion of the two.

Not callous conviction.

Not sentimental fuzziness.

Loving with integrity.

Speaking truth mercifully.

**Growing up into Christ**

The result of

balancing truth and mercy

is spiritual growth.

Compare Proverbs 3:3-4

I enjoy the “key concepts” approach, because the ideas reach down where people live, uproot misunderstandings, and help learners tie biblical principles to everyday experiences.

**Personal Response**

This organizational pattern organizes the Bible study around the personal experiences of class members. This approach is the most unstructured of any discussed so far. It is also the best way to involve learners in the class discussion. Focus attention on positive testimonies that illustrate the principle you are teaching. If you are discussing prayer, ask learners to share times they’ve prayed effectively. Avoid asking them to confess their failure to pray. If you’re discussing tithing, ask for testimonies on good experiences in giving.

Carefully anchor the sharing of personal experiences to the Bible passage being studied. Otherwise, the study can result in mere fluff. Still, this kind of positive sharing

breathes “real life” into the study.

**Example:** After surveying the first missionary journey of Paul, ask class members to describe mission activities and projects they’ve personally experienced. (Remember the learning readiness for this was a personal testimony of the teacher. Earn the right to ask members to share by sharing yourself first.)

**Principles of Teaching**

We’ve introduced you to four basic ways to organize the Bible study section of a teaching plan. Now let’s look at several sets of teaching principles that relate to these four emphases.

**Teach So They’ll Remember**

Teaching for knowledge requires more than telling learners about the Bible. When you set up a target of knowledge, you want your learners to remember the essentials of what you teach. If your learners don’t remember from one week to the next what you’ve taught, then you are not establishing knowledge. You are merely transmitting information. Here are some suggestions to enhance your learners’ memory.

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*Redeem the time  
by  
helping learners remember  
what you teach.*

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**Advance Organizers**

The newsprint map of the cities of Asia Minor suggested under the discussion of learning readiness is an example of an advance organizer. An advance organizer tells the

learner at the beginning of class what information will be covered in class.

Tell the class your objective for the day. "At the end of the class today, you will be able to list the pieces of the Armor of God from memory."

Or, give a short self-graded quiz over the major points of the session.

Or, write out an outline of the key points on poster board and tape it to the front wall of the class. Each of these help learners get a complete picture of the material.

### *Structure*

Learners remember the material much better when it is organized and presented in a clear manner. Emphasize major points as you go along. Use verbal markers to separate one topic from another: "Okay, we've seen how the disciples avoided Paul when he came to Jerusalem. Now let's see how and why they eventually accepted him." Review the section on "organization" for specific suggestions.

### *Sequence*

Learners do better when your material seems to be "going somewhere." Sequence your presentation logically from point to point. Help learners visualize the sequence much like a series of snapshots that tell a story.

### *Active review*

The learner will remember key points better if you use active review throughout the Bible study section. Have learners repeat key points from memory during the session. This is more effective than passive review, in which you repeat the key points for your learners. Enhancing recall requires some measure of drill and practice ("All right, let's

say these together"). Keep the drills short to avoid monotony. Space them out over the session rather than doing them all at once. Memory of items increases when your learners concentrate on remembering part of a list, then relax while to discuss items in the list, then remember, and so on.

### **Teach So They'll Understand**

It is important for learners to know what the Bible says. But you must carry them beyond the mere recall of biblical facts. Unless they understand what those facts mean, they can't live them in a consistent way. Remember the student in Chapter One who thought he was explaining the meaning of "joy," but was merely talking about it. There is more to teaching than getting the right answer. The following story is a favorite of mine and illustrates the point well.

---

*Redeem the time  
by helping learners  
understand  
what you teach.*

---

An educational researcher was observing a 5th grade science class. They had been studying the composition of the earth. "Do you mind if I ask the class a question?" the researcher asked. "Why no," responded the teacher. He turned to the class and asked, "If I were to dig a hole 100 feet deep, would the bottom of the hole be warmer or colder than the surface?" There was no response. The teacher said, "I don't think you asked the question right. Let me try." Turning to the class she said, "What is the condition of the interior of the earth?" Immediately the class responded in unison, "Igneous fusion!" The teacher beamed. "Very good," she said. "So,"

continued the researcher, “would the bottom of the hole be warmer or colder than the surface?” No one ventured a guess.

They knew the answer, but did not understand what it meant. Many of your learners “know the Bible,” but do they understand what the Bible means? They may know the answers to a lot of religious questions. But do they understand those answers? If they don’t, you are simply playing “Bible trivia” with them. This will fill time, but it will not redeem the time. Here’s how to enhance understanding.

### *Simple to Complex*

Begin with simple, single concepts. Then move to more complex principles that synthesize these concepts together into a meaningful whole.

The “key concepts” organization on page follows this sequence. First explain the meaning of speaking “the truth.” Few would object to that idea. Then explain the meaning of speaking “in love.” Again, few would have a problem with that idea. But when you put the phrase together, “speaking the truth in love,” you present a principle that will be new to many of your learners. People can speak truthfully (often losing their tempers). And they can speak lovingly (often ignoring the truth of wrongdoing). But to speak with love-truth, simultaneously, is a complex concept to teach!

### *Concrete to Abstract*

Begin the session discussing things that your learners are familiar with: their experiences, opinions, or ideas. These are tangible, concrete things known by your learners. Then move to Bible words (knowledge), Bible meanings (concepts), and finally to eternal principles. Each stage moves the learner far-

ther from his own tangible reality into greater levels of abstract thinking. Jesus’ parables are excellent examples of this sequence. He began with tangible things his hearers knew about: wind, sheep and goats, treasure. Then He moved them to consider how these things reflected the Kingdom of God.

### *Examples and Non-examples*

Clarify concepts by using examples of what the concept is and examples of what the concept is not. For example, in a session on agape love, you want to separate agape love from other kinds of love your learners know about. What kind of love is agape love? What kinds of love is it not? Both kinds of comparisons are important. Contrast agape love with eros (lust) and phileo (brotherly affection). This removes the emotional and affectionate aspects of our English word “love” from agape, which means “doing good to others.” Jesus does not command us to “like” everyone, but He commands us to agape them--do for them in their best interest. In a similar way, “Christian joy” should be contrasted with concepts often confused with it, such as happiness, pleasure, and fun.

When you set up a target for understanding, ask yourself repeatedly, “How do I explain this?” “What examples are there of this?” “What confuses people about this concept?”

### *Ask Questions*

Clarify the meaning of concepts by asking questions. By far the most important part of teaching for understanding is being able to ask the right question at the right time. The **kind** of question you ask is critical.

**Avoid rhetorical questions.** Do not ask a question and then answer it yourself. When you use rhetorical questions, you actually condition learners not to answer. Then

when you ask a question you **do want** your learners to answer, you may wonder (often in cold silence) why no one responds! The reason is clear: you've taught your learners to wait for you to answer your own questions. Rhetorical questions reduce participation and hinder thinking. Much of the lag time between question and class response is due to learner uncertainty. They simply do not know whether you really want them to answer or not. Once they see you really want them to answer, **then** they begin thinking about your question. My rule is simple: Never ask a question unless you want a learner to answer it. If you will consistently apply this rule in your teaching, you will discover the lag time between question and response will diminish to almost nothing.

**Avoid leading questions.** Do not ask questions that have obvious answers. Such questions bore learners and stifle their interest in the study. "Do you see that Paul is saying that we should. . . ." (Well, of course!) "Do you understand that Jesus is teaching us to. . . ." (Sure! That's what you just said!). It is better to explain what the passage means than to ask leading questions.

**Avoid simplistic questions.** Avoid yes/no questions. "Was Jesus Jewish?" "Was the apostle Peter married?" "Did Cain kill Abel?" "Who was David's second wife?" "Was Barnabas the one who helped Paul in Jerusalem and Antioch?" These factual questions extinguish the thinking process.

**Use conceptual questions.** Focus learner attention on meaning. "John describes Jesus' eyes as 'a blazing fire' (Rev 1:14). What does this mean?"

Or, another: "In Col 3:8-15, Paul lists some characteristics that Christians should take off,

and characteristics we should put on. How are these characteristics related?"

Or another: "Jesus says, 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.' (Mt 5:16, NIV) He also says, 'Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen of them.' (Mt 6:1, NIV). How would you explain this apparent contradiction?"

**Probe for understanding.** Probing questions cause learners to "dig deeper" for answers. Go beyond initial responses to get at the heart of what learners understand. Ask for more detail. For example,

You ask: "How can we go out this week and agape the people we meet?"

A learner says, "Be kind to people."

**Probe:** "Okay. How would you do that?"

The learner thinks a moment and says, "Well, I'd be nice to people."

This is still too vague. You are looking for some specific action the learner will take.

**Probe:** "So, how exactly will you be nice to people?"

The learner thinks a little more. Then, as if a light snaps on, he says, "I know! I could visit my friend who's in the infirmary!"

"Excellent! You've got the idea! Someone else have a suggestion?"

Learners reorganize the material in order to answer your questions. This reorganization

of material enhances their understanding.

**Redirect questions.** Probing questions can cause discomfort for learners. You can make a learner feel as if you are harassing him if you continue to probe too long. Redirect the question by asking the class as a whole for an answer.

Let's say that the learner in the example above shows signs of embarrassment at your question.

**Probe:** "So, how exactly will you be nice to people?"

He stammers ("uhhhh..uhhh.....uhh"). He looks at the floor and pats his leg.

**Redirect:** "Class, what specifically can we do to be nice?"

The heart of good teaching is knowing what question to ask and how to ask it. The best teachers can frame questions spontaneously out of lecture material or group discussions. Practicing each of the question types above will enhance your skills in the classroom.

### *Clarify meanings by problem-solving*

When you pose a problem related to the subject you're studying, the responses of the learners give a clear view of how well they understand. Problems are considered differently by learners. Priorities and values are reflected in the decisions learners make. Problem-solving takes you as close to real life events as you can get inside a classroom. Let's look at examples of three types of problem-solving: statement response, situation response, and case response.

**Statement response.** Write a statement on the chalkboard before class begins. At the

beginning of the class, give learners time to analyze and then respond to the statement. Write down the responses for use later in the session. Here's an example:

Mary is finishing a unit on discipleship. She wants to reinforce the major issues they have discussed over the past four weeks. At the beginning of the session, Mary steps to the chalkboard and writes,

**The essence of being a Christian  
is obeying  
the teachings of Christ.**

Turning to the class she says, "Over the past four weeks we've studied the book of Colossians. We have discussed what it means, as well as what it doesn't mean, to be a Christian. Take the next fifteen minutes to reflect on our unit of study (she points to the unit poster she's used during the month) and think about this statement (she points to the board). Decide whether you agree with the statement and why. Use the key ideas and passages we've discussed to support your decision. You might want to join forces with several of your neighbors and share recollections of our studies. I'll be glad to help any of the groups if you need it. Otherwise, we'll come back together in about fifteen minutes.

To react to the statement, learners have to define "essence" and "Christianity" and "obeying the teachings of Christ." They must review passages they've studied. They gather information, define and refine definitions of key terms, and spur each other's thinking as they go about forming a position for or

against the statement. After the fifteen minutes, Mary calls the groups back together and asks them to share their positions. The general position might be something like this:

Following the teachings of Christ is certainly part of the Christian lifestyle! But the essence of being a Christian is being yoked to the Teacher, not the teachings. The essence of being a Christian is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27, NIV). Those who are "in Christ" spend their lives growing in their commitment to His teachings and living them before the world.

In 30 minutes, Mary brought together four weeks of lecture and discussion, dialogue and personal study. Through this one simple exercise Mary stimulated active review, reflection, and group recall of important facts, definitions and concepts. Each learner was free to contribute from his own experiences and discoveries. Learners gained insight and understanding as they listened to and shared with each other.

**Situation response.** Rather than giving the class a statement to react to, provide them a situation they might face. The closer the situation fits the learners' real world, the better. This is because relevant situations help learners integrate Bible teachings with their own views. Here's an example:

Matt's class has been studying a unit on the atoning work of Christ. The study has included passages from Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Romans and Hebrews. Posters and charts that summarize and emphasize key teachings adorn the walls. Matt hands each member a slip of paper containing

the following situation:

"A friend stops you during lunch break and, after a few minutes of small talk, says, 'I know you are a church-goer. I just don't understand how you can believe in such a bloody thing as death on a cross. It's just a holdover from ancient pagan sacrifices, seems to me. How do you explain it?'"

Matt divides the class into groups of three and gives these instructions. "The key question of the day is, '**How would you respond to your friend's question?**' Think about the passages we've studied over the past four weeks for clues to a proper answer.

This is a complex learning task. The gap between Sunday School words and an actual response to a friend is wide. Integrating the past (recall) and present (posters and chart summaries) into a specific response both requires and promotes understanding.

**Case response.** Case studies bring together multiple truths or principles into one problem. Mary's "statement" focused on Bible study concepts. Matt's "situation" focused on learner actions. Both are helpful in promoting understanding. Yet they are limited because they usually aim at a single truth or principle. A case study reflects real life issues better than statements or situations because they are more complex.

There may be more than one correct answer to a given case because learners will approach it in different ways. Some may approach the case with rational coldness. They have light but no warmth. Others may approach the same case with irrational emotion. They have warmth but no light. Cold

light and warm darkness fail to solve the case biblically. We need both light and warmth. Learners discover the values and ideals of others as they solve the case. This process reveals blind spots in learner thinking. As learners share their solutions, each gains experience in looking at the situation from perspectives other than his own. These elements make case studies an effective tool for learning to solve problems. Here's an example:

Martha is introducing a new unit on Christian relationships in the home, at church and at work. She writes the following case study and hands it out to her members at the beginning of the first session.

"Helen has been a Christian for two years. Her conversion made a real difference in her life. Out of a thankful heart she has become involved in several programs at church. Frank, her husband, is not a Christian and views her change with something less than celebration. One of Helen's favorite activities is a weekday Ladies Bible Class that meets in the homes of the members. Helen has become somewhat of an adviser to the group. She's a concerned friend, a good listener. One afternoon a member of the class calls Helen for help with a problem. Helen agrees to meet with the caller that evening, though she knows Frank had made plans for dinner. 'We can go out for dinner another time,' she thinks to herself. 'And besides, this is the LORD'S work!'"

Evaluate Helen's actions and reasoning based on your understanding of Christian relationships. Was her

decision right or wrong? Could she have handled the situation differently?

There are several responses that could be expected. Some may consider Helen's actions wrong because she broke a prior commitment. This is bad manners. She rationalizes by labelling it "the Lord's work" and yet her own husband is lost and needs a patient, loving witness too. She should have followed through with the original plans and arranged for meeting the caller.

Others may consider the actions justified under the circumstances. Her commitment is first to Christ. Frank is not a Christian and has been less than supportive of her faith. She should not let his desire for a "night out" hinder her ministry within the class. If this were a consistent pattern, there might be cause for alarm. But her friend is hurting and needs Helen's help. She did the right thing.

Still others might look at the situation from "wives submit to your husbands" and see Helen as a rebellious and unsubmitive wife. (This would surely stimulate discussion.)

This kind of flexibility and discussion scares some people. Pat answers are safer and more reassuring than several "possible solutions." But look at the benefits. Martha learns about her members as they respond to this case. She can include specific questions and examples in future sessions to address misunderstandings shared in class. She will know how the learners feel about the sensitive issues of home and Christian friendships. She will direct class learning more effectively because they shared these ideas and opinions.

## Teach So They'll Personally Respond

The securing of personal responses from your class depends on how free learners feel to share experiences, opinions, or feelings. There must be an atmosphere of freedom, of openness, in the classroom, or learners will keep their ideas and experiences to themselves. As we have seen, learner ideas and experiences are essential to your goal of 'redeeming time' and helping them grow. The more you can involve your learners in the session--the less detached and isolated they are--the better you can teach them. How do we improve the openness of our classes? How do we help learners become personally involved? Let's look at these two vital aspects of Bible study.

---

*Redeem the time  
by  
helping learners become  
personally involved  
with God's Word and  
other believers.*

---

### *Improve openness*

To help members remove their masks and share personal experiences with others, build an atmosphere of trust and acceptance within your class. You might want to review the right pillar of the Model in Chapter One as you consider these methods.

**Use subjective questions.** Subjective questions allow the learner to share personal opinions related to the passage. They do not require detailed knowledge of the Bible passage, nor do they depend on the learner's ability to think clearly or logically. The in-

attention of the question is to "open the learner" to the class--to see how the learner is feeling or thinking within himself. Here are some examples of subjective questions.

"Jesus forgave Peter for his betrayal during the trial (John 17). How would you have reacted if you had been in Peter's place?"

Or, "What experiences of forgiveness have you had?"

Or, "God gave Moses a task that seemed impossible. Have you received God's call to what seemed an impossible task? How did you respond? What happened?"

Questions such as these move into the hearts, as well as the minds, of learners. These do much more to build an interactive environment than factual questions that call for specific answers. "Can anyone name the twelve disciples?" "Henry, tell me who Saul was. (The first King of Israel?) No, no, the other one." "What was David's wife's name? (Bathsheba?) No, the first one." "Where was James when he wrote Revelation? Oh, I meant John!" Teachers who use too many factual questions will reduce their members' willingness to contribute in class.

**Ask the Whole Group.** Ask questions of the whole group rather than of one individual. Calling a learner's name before asking a question puts the "chosen one" on the spot. Also, since you have already decided who will answer, the other learners in the group do not need to think about the question. This limits their thinking. Asking questions of the whole group gives each an opportunity to think and allows anyone to share.

**Earn the right.** You have no right to ask your learners to share personal experiences if you are not willing to do so. Earn the

right to call for personal experiences by sharing one of your own first. However, this is not an invitation to put your 'every experience' on display before a captive audience.

**Focus on positive experiences.** A common mistake of inexperienced teachers is to ask students to share failures rather than successes. You will do more for class openness and trust if you only call for positive experiences. Such experiences focus learners' thoughts on the redeeming work of Christ.

It is true that learners may well share times of failure as they feel more comfortable in the class. This can be a wonderful display of openness in a class. But do not ask learners to share their failures in front of the group. ("Confession before the group" is an important principle of brainwashing).

Compare the two examples below. Which class would you rather sit in Sunday after Sunday?

- 1 -

Teacher: Okay, tell me. How many of you did not have a time of Bible study and prayer this past week. C'mon. Raise your hands.

Pupil 1: (Bows head, slowly raises hand)

Pupil 2: (Defiantly crosses arms, looks straight at the teacher, frowns)

Pupils 3,4: Smile knowingly, glance at each other, say and do nothing more.

- 2 -

Teacher: This last week I was feeling like God was far away. During my prayer and Bible study time, I asked God to give me an assurance of His presence. As I read the Bible, I grew closer and closer to the Lord. My feelings of separation from God went away. Have you had an experience like this? (several nod yes). Share your experiences with us.

Pupils 3,4: Share with the class their experiences of prayer and Bible study.

Pupil 1: Tells that he has not had a time of prayer and Bible study for a long time, but wants to start one. "How do I get started?"

Pupil 2: Thinks to himself: (I haven't given much thought to a devotional time, but since several in his class have...hmmmm?)

The sharing of personal experiences in the class, over time, helps members learn from each other and develops an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. This atmosphere is evident in example two, but lacking in example one. Notice how the masks went up in example 1, and came down in example 2? This is the intention of teaching for personal response.

### *Handling wrong answers*

Give attention to how you respond to wrong answers. When a learner answers your question, it shows that he has developed enough confidence to risk being wrong. Take care to handle an inadequate or incorrect answer sensitively. If you react in a way that belittles or humiliates him, he will "put his mask up," and you will lose several weeks of teaching time as you try to win back his

trust. And you may lose the chance to teach him altogether! Look at the following example:

Teacher: Who built the great Temple in Jerusalem?

John: (Enthusiastically raises hand and says) David!

Now what should you do? The answer is not David, but Solomon. David gathered the materials, and wanted to build the Temple very much. But God would not let him. It fell to Solomon to build it. How does one correct the misinformation without belittling the answerer, or undermining future eagerness to answer questions?

An effective approach is to redirect the question to the class. "Okay, are there other ideas?" When another gives the correct answer, chances are that John will remember that it was indeed Solomon and that his answer is wrong. "That's right! It is Solomon." You can then affirm John for his eagerness to participate and answer. One problem with this approach is that, if you always respond this way to an incorrect answer, then the phrase "Okay, are there other ideas?" will soon be taken the same as if you said "Wrong!" One way around this problem is to use this response at times when the answer is right. "Okay, are there other ideas?" This causes learners to rethink the question and the answer. "Isn't that right?" "Am I missing something?" "No, that's the right answer!" And you can then affirm their response.

How, then, do we respond when a person answers wrongly, or shares an opinion that does not reflect clear biblical thinking? **Support the person** and deal with the answer. Throw the answer to the **class** for analysis.

Defend the learner's **willingness to share** if others criticize him, but guide the class to see what the Bible says. Or **respond yourself**. "I see what you're saying, but I have a problem with that. It seems to me that Paul is saying (express the idea in other words). "How do you react to that?"

Or when members begin to argue, **defend the right of all to speak** their minds. Keep the discussion on the **issues** involved. Defuse the emotions as much as possible.

We do not give up the Truth of God's Word to placate the feelings of people (2 Tm 4:1-5). Also, we do not condemn or ridicule God's people in the name of Truth (Jn 3:17-18). We teach the Truth by patiently leading them to compare their own conceptions with those of the Bible. This requires trust and openness.

Nothing hampers openness in the classroom more than harsh, judgmental, humiliating responses to incorrect answers. The loving response affirms the learner, corrects the answer, and teaches both biblical content and Christian behavior simultaneously.

#### *Avoid a harsh or negative attitude*

When you present a negative, dominating spirit, you build psychological walls between yourself and those who disagree with you. You hinder learner participation. And you may well destroy your opportunity to teach. Immature teachers believe they are "standing strong" for their convictions. "If they'd get right with God, they'd agree with me!" Such egotistical attitudes destroy the fragile atmosphere that helps learners grow.

#### *Model desired attitudes and behaviors*

Real changes in the lives of your learners come not from the words you speak, but the

life you live. Subjective learning is more “caught from the teacher” than “taught by the teacher.” As you prepare to teach, ask the Lord to help you live it. Aspire to narrow the gap between the biblical ideal and your way of living. Your struggle toward Christlikeness will be a living example to your class members.

### *Work with small groups*

Learners feel less threatened in a group of four than they do in a group of fourteen or forty. There are always a group of learners in a class who seldom raise a question or make a comment. They do not have the confidence to speak up in the larger group. But when placed in the small groups, they are less anxious and are more willing to share.

Further, only one person can speak at a time in an intact class. When you divide the class into smaller groups, more learners share because more than one person can speak at once. The result is greater freedom for sharing and participation by more learners.

### *Learners are worthwhile individuals*

Whether your learners agree with you or not, whether they are pleasant or not, they are individuals for whom Christ died. They are worthy. They are valuable. Treat them as precious jewels. You may “lose the battle” today, but ultimately “win the war” if you persevere in loving the individual.

A graduate professor stands before his classes on the first day of every semester and says, “You are here to learn from me. I am here to teach you. I am not interested in your ideas. Please do not interrupt me with questions. Study your texts, take good notes, and you will do well in the course.” During one semester a student interrupted this professor with a question on the assigned reading

for the day. “That is one of the most stupid questions I’ve ever been asked. I’ll not take the time to respond to it.” Such harsh and abusive treatment destroys any desire for personal involvement. Indeed, personal involvement is defined in this professor’s classroom as an “odious interruption.” Such a professor could be replaced with video tapes of his lectures! It is obvious he has not translated “Christlikeness” into his behavior in the classroom!

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**Such a professor  
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Consider Jesus’ treatment of the Samaritan woman, the Roman centurion, Matthew and Zacchaeus--the tax collectors, and Nicodemus the Pharisee. Treat your learners as Jesus would. God has brought your learners into your class. You are a steward of those you teach. You will find that “love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Pet 4:8, NIV). A teacher who loves his students overcomes many deficiencies in style or technique.

### *“Rabbit-chasing.”*

During a Sunday morning session, an issue or question not directly related to the topic may capture the class. In just a few seconds, individuals in the class can move the discussion away from the teacher’s line of thought to something completely unrelated. This un-

expected diversion from the lesson plan is called “chasing a rabbit.” This can cause frustration for class members and fragmented learning in the class. As a feeling of openness grows in the class, there is a tendency to ‘chase rabbits’ more. There are several ways we can handle these “rabbits.”

**Stop the rabbit.** Though we invite sharing in class, we also restrain chit-chat that we deem unproductive and irrelevant to the study at hand. If you judge the issue or question as unproductive, gently bring the class back to the main line of thought. “That’s an interesting point you’ve raised. It is something we could spend an hour on, but we need to focus very carefully on the question before us, which is. . . .”

**Follow the rabbit.** If the question or issue captures the interest of the class, you may choose to spend time dealing with it. You will learn when to do this, how much time to spend on it, and its value to the class only through repeated experiences with a particular class. Every time a “rabbit” appears, you must decide whether to stop it or follow it. You will inevitably make wrong decisions, and will either waste time needlessly or miss a good “teaching moment.” But this is just part of learning how to best ‘redeem the time.’

**Postpone the rabbit.** Consider postponing a “rabbit” until after class. It’s fine to do this when there is little classwide interest in the issue. By doing this you avoid addressing the issue in class while showing that you really care about your student’s concerns.

“Rabbits” generate interest in Bible study. Learning that is relevant to learners literally ‘explodes!’ out of spontaneous questions

raised by learners. But balance is required. Too much rabbit-chasing will destroy the best of lesson plans. Watch the ‘body language’ of your class for clues of their interest in a particular rabbit. Disinterest or frustration (“Here we go again!”) is shown by crossed arms, crossed legs, looking at the ceiling or floor, rolling eyes, heavy sighs, tapping feet or fingers. Interest is shown by such things as leaning forward to hear, looking at the person raising the issue, asking a question or agreeing with the point, and spontaneous chit-chat among class members regarding the issue.

### Teach So They’ll Relate

Whether you build relationships among your class members depends on the opportunities you give them to work together. The greatest drawback of lecturing is that learners focus on the teacher, never on one another. Give your learners occasions for bridge-building among themselves. We have already discussed advantages of using small groups. Consider the variety of groupings that you can use.

#### *Vary group size*

Groups can consist of pairs, triads, quads, or quints (2, 3, 4, 5). You can divide the class in halves, thirds, or fourths. Each size grouping is different. Each has its own best use. Use larger groups of five or six when you want learners to review several weeks of Bible study. Groups need more heads for remembering content and principles of application. Use smaller groups when you ask them to share personal experiences, discoveries or problems. Smaller groups provide a better environment for sharing.

#### *Vary group type*

In an adult couples’ class, one could have husband-wife pairs, or men-only/women-

only groups, or randomly mixed groups. Each kind of group produces its own kind of learning outcome.

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*Redeem the time  
by  
helping learners build koinonia,  
a sense of community.*

---

**The husband-wife pair** allows couples to use their knowledge of each other. These classroom efforts might strengthen their relationship at home.

**Men-only/women-only groups** reflect the different viewpoints of men and women toward issues in our society. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen 1:27). Men and women differ, but both are created in God's image. As you lead your class to explore differences of perspective, in light of scripture, you contribute to a richer understanding of issue, scripture, and relationship.

**Random groupings** build relationships in the class as members work together in a common task. Since the groupings are random, the combinations of members differ from assignment to assignment.

**Plan gatherings outside the classroom**  
Relationships will remain tentative if the Sunday School classroom is the only place your learners meet. Mission projects, church work days, or a cup of coffee after church will build bridges fast. Plan occasional social events in homes, at the church, or "out on the

town" that get members together during the week.

While this aspect of relationships does not occur during the Bible study section of the plan, it does relate well to the goal of building koinonia in the class. Worthwhile Christian ministry does not occur among strangers. If your Sunday School class becomes the kind that ministers to one another, it will happen as members grow together in mutual relationships. You can 'redeem the time' for the process by including a variety of grouping procedures in your lesson plan.

### Teach So They'll Do the Word

Jesus made it clear that learning and action go together. "Go and do thou likewise" accompanied His teaching. It should accompany ours as well. The problem-solving activities and removing-the-mask techniques already discussed are excellent ways get learning out of the classroom. But how, specifically, can we coax learners into action?

You do it by assigning activities to be done during the week. These assignments can be made to individuals, groups, or to the class at large. Here are some suggestions.

#### *Individual assignments*

When one of your learners shows special interest or talent, suggest a special project that will allow them to use this interest or talent. He will learn more on his own. And he can share what he learns with the class as well. Let's say one of your members likes geography. Ask her to **draw a map** of the unfamiliar area the class is studying. Another might enjoy language study. Assign him a list of words from soon-to-be-studied passages. He can **dig into commentaries** and be prepared to share his findings in class. Others may have talents for drama or music

or poetry. They can **direct mini-plays** or **write songs or poems** to share in class.

This variety enhances the study. But the focused attention of learners on passages and places, on words and scripts, deepen their commitment to God's Word. Use sensitivity and patience in suggesting projects for your learners. If you encourage too little, the assignment may never be attempted. If you encourage too much, the assignment may seem like a requirement rather than a privilege. Weave the talents of your members into the class, as they are able to do and willing to do.

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*Redeem the time  
by helping learners  
put what they learn  
into practice during the week.*

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**Doing for the Class.** Bill was a member of my deaf adult Sunday School class. One Sunday I introduced a new unit of study that began the next week. The theme of the study was the travels of Jesus during His earthly ministry. Bill asked me after class if he could help me by drawing a map of the Palestine area to use in tracing Jesus' travels. Bill had shown no evidence of drawing ability, so I applauded his willingness all the while doubting that anything of real value would be done.

I walked into the classroom the next Sunday and was surprised to see most of the class sitting there waiting for me! They had a different look about them -- expectant, I think. They said nothing but pointed to the front wall. And there it was. A map. Some six feet tall and four feet wide. Drawn in India ink

and decorated with pastels. Blue Mediterranean. Snow-topped Mt. Herman. Rivers and lakes.

There were fishing boats on the Mediterranean and Sea of Galilee. Each Roman Province was labelled in precise serif capital letters. Each major town and city was represented by a black dot, its name neatly lettered out beside.

Bill had studied all 13 lessons in his quarterly that week. He noted the major cities Jesus visited and one major event in each. These cities were represented by a black dot with a red circle around it. Beside the city, he drew a small illustration of the major event. There before our eyes was a graphical presentation of our next 13 weeks of lessons.

What a blessing to me and to the class! But more important was the change in Bill. He had learned so much that week. His work had been praised and was now on display for all to see and use. Bill was changed forever that week. At my request, he continued to draw poster illustrations for each lesson. We hung them around the walls for review. And when I left for seminary, Bill became the teacher of the class.

**Doing for others.** Toward the end of a lesson on I Corinthians 13, I asked members of the class what they could do "this very week" to love someone the way Paul described agape. Nearly everyone in the room shared something they could do. One young lady in the class volunteered to visit her friend in the infirmary. The next Sunday she came into class more excited than I had ever seen her. As we reviewed the study and the assignments, she shared her experience.

She had gone on Wednesday to visit her

friend, who had been in the Infirmary for three weeks. They visited for a long while. Then her friend said, "I've been here for three weeks and no one has visited me. Why did you come to see me?" The young lady smiled and said, "Because I know God loves me and cares about me. He loves you too, and wanted me to come see you. So, here I am!"

The next Sunday her friend visited our Sunday School class. It was the first time she had been to church in 8 years. It was not long until she made her profession of faith and was baptized. She had been touched by the Lord through one who was faithful in "doing the Word."

When you tie specific assignments to specific learners in your class, using their unique gifts to enhance Bible study, you come closest to the true role of a discipler. You can have no greater impact in the life of class members than to engage them in meaningful activities which mix their gifts and God's Word. As a craftsman carefully guides his apprentice, so we guide our learners into the riches of living out God's Word.

### *Group assignments*

Ask a group of learners to work together on an assignment. They teach one another in a relaxed setting outside of class. Their presentation in class adds variety to the hour. It gives the members a sense of belonging and usefulness in the class. Further, this is an ideal way to involve members who are hesitant to accept an individual assignment.

### *Class assignments*

Suggest from time to time a general assignment for the whole class to do. This might be a list of questions to answer. It might be a test or reaction scale to fill out. It might be a list of key words to define in preparation for

a brainstorming session. Or a case study to analyze. Or a spiritual diary to keep for the week. These kinds of assignments bind the class together in doing common tasks which will improve their understanding of the Bible.

Do the assignments yourself! You give the proper example to the class by doing this, but more, you make yourself part of the whole group.

### *Use assignments in class*

When you make an assignment to be done during the week, be sure to plan time in the next session to discuss what happened. Learners will quickly realize that the assignments are not important if you don't do this.

What is the benefit of this emphasis on outside work to Sunday School? To the learners? To you? There are many. Let's list some major ones.

- Develops the gifts** of learners.
- Increases interest** in personal Bible study.
- Increases enthusiasm** for Sunday School.
- Reduces teacher study time** as learners share in teaching.
- Increases the variety** of learning experiences. Encourages learners to **explore**.
- Builds rapport** between teacher and members.
- Develops teaching skills** in learners.
- Helps **shy members to participate** with others.
- Expands **Sunday School into the week**.
- Reduces dependence** on the teacher.

All of these benefits are within easy reach of the teacher who longs to see Bible truths lived out in the daily experiences of his learners, and who is willing to plan ahead in order to make it happen.



**Be patient  
and make changes  
gradually!**

### *Deciding what to do*

Over the past few pages we've concentrated on the complexities of the Bible study section of a lesson plan. How do you decide what to do in the Bible study section? Here are some suggestions to help you determine what learning tools to use when.

**Class history.** What kinds of teaching experiences is your class used to? Don't try to do too much too fast. Don't make drastic changes. Build trust first. Classes that are accustomed to lecture (and no participation) will not like being asked questions and may rebel at the suggestion of group work. Classes that are accustomed to free-wheeling discussion will not like to be lectured to, and may resent your trying to structure the class by way of questions or comments. Learn from your learners! Then move them gradually and gently into better methods of learning.

**Class preferences.** What are the methods that produce the best response? If the class enjoys group discussion, use this while integrating more explanation and "meat." If the class prefers lecture, use this while integrating more participatory activities.

**Choose new approaches wisely.** What new approach can you use without creating undue anxiety or resistance? The class has had testimonies before. Why not record answers to a central question at a Wednesday night supper, and play the answers for the class. The class has participated in discussions as a class. Is it time to try using small groups to extend this participatory approach? Build on new approaches that are well received. Stretch the class just as you might stretch a muscle -- slow, gradual movements.

**Prepare the way for new methods.** It is better to lead learners gently into new learning experiences than to shock them with an unfamiliar experience or class arrangement. If you plan to use a "new approach" (New to your class, at least), how will you prepare class members for it. "This week we focused on (content) by analyzing the passage as a class. Next week, let's work together in smaller groups to insure everyone a chance to participate."

**Choose appropriate activities.** You've set up a target for your learners to hit. Select the kinds of activities that will help them hit

it. If you're afraid the activities will be unacceptable to your learners, then you've set up a target that you cannot hit. Set up a realistic target for your learners, and then plan activities in line with that target.

**Watch for "the fire."** In time, one of your class members will "catch fire." A discovery made. An experience had. A lesson put into practice with positive results. Interest is ignited. Enthusiasm recharged. Move the class in this learner's direction by emphasizing his experience.

**Be patient and move gradually.** As one and then another of your learners catch the excitement of life-changing Bible study, you will be given greater freedom to do new things in class. Be cautious. Do not go too far too fast. Be patient with learners who aren't excited and don't seem to care. They may come around (think of disciple Thomas), or they may not (think of disciple Judas). Be faithful and continue to plant the seed.

**Hit the target?** The Bible Study section ends when your learners (or at least some of them) hit the target you've set up. If your target is knowledge, can they identify or recall what you've said they would? If your target is understanding, can they explain or give examples of the concepts you've taught? If personal response, have they engaged in sharing their experiences related to the study? If purposeful action, have they shared ways they can put the study into practice during the week?

If not, why not? Was the target too small? Did you fail to plan your time correctly? Did you use inappropriate methods? Did something unexpected happen in class? Each time you evaluate a session, you gain priceless help for your next teaching plan.

## 4. THE CONCLUSION

### "Tie it up with a bow"

A friend of mine is a wonder at wrapping gifts. He takes such care at how he cuts the paper to fit, how he makes each fold. He uses different kinds of ribbon to make intricate patterns on the package. Then, as a final touch, he designs a special bow that sets the whole effect. His packages are so beautiful that I hate to unwrap them.

The objective for the session has been accomplished. Now, in the closing minutes of the hour, conclude the session by summarizing, or leading the class to summarize, what has happened. What have they discovered? What are they carrying away from the class? How will they use what they've learned during the week?

The way you draw your session to a close is as important as Bill's gift wrap is to his packages. It is your last chance to 'redeem the time' for your learners. Here are some suggestions for "tying it up in a bow."

### *Avoid total closure*

People want to close discussions and end learning activities in a satisfactory way. They want to find solutions to problems you've raised. Educators call this tendency closure. It is frustrating for learners to leave the class wondering what the point of the study was.

On the other hand, you create a sense of finality or ending to the session when you bring the class to total closure. This is not good, because you want the learning and experiences to follow your learners into the week. Therefore, draw the session to a close

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without coming to total closure. Here's how to do it.

**Review major points**

Briefly review the key discoveries of the session. You can do this passively (teacher review) if time is short, or lead the class to review actively what they've learned (learner review).

**Involve learners**

Ask learners to share their discoveries, feelings, and reactions to what they've learned from the session. If you listen carefully, you will pick up on the kinds of things that interest and satisfy your learners.

*Redeem the time  
by making an assignment  
for learners to do  
during the week.*

**5. The Assignment**

**"Move It into Life"**

Most teachers believe they are finished when they've made their conclusion. But if you end the session with the conclusion and a closing prayer, you effectively cut off the Sunday School hour from the rest of the week. Sunday School is over. Very few class members will even think of Sunday School until next Sunday. If the mere thought of Sunday School never crosses their minds, how in the world can they begin to "meditate" on what they've learned. Do not end with the conclu-

Objective
Learning Readiness
<b>Bible Study</b>
Conclusion
Assignment

sion! End the session by opening your learners to things they can do during the week that will solidify their growth in the Lord. Here are two key suggestions:

**Lead to commitment**

Ask learners to suggest ways they will act on what they've learned during the week. Write down these suggestions and review them at the beginning of the next class period (without names, of course!).

**Prompt for next session**

Raise a question, pose a problem, or provide a situation analysis for learners to work on during the week. This "advance organizer" for the next session helps extend Bible study into the week and establishes a beginning point for learning readiness in the next session.

Tying individual sessions together by way of assignments and reports in class pays rich dividends in the spiritual growth of class members. We'll discuss this more in the next session as we consider the unit plan.

**In Summary**

Use this five-part format to build your teaching plans and you will put more punch into them. You will do much more with this approach than without it. You will 'redeem the time' in a very practical way. But there's more that can be done! How can we buy up time between Sundays?

**THE UNIT PLAN**

How you plan from week to week has a dramatic effect on the quality of learning that happens in your classroom. A common approach is to prepare for one session at a

time. Teachers learn all they can during the week about the "lesson" for Sunday. They gather materials and select methods. They write examples and organize notes. They build the "lesson" as a complete package: introduction, Bible study, and application. The learning experience ends when Sunday School ends. Next week, a new lesson will be presented by the teacher. The "Sunday School experience" is 52 disjointed sessions. Most of the teacher's words are forgotten by Monday because there is no reason to think about the material between Sundays. Attendance is less consistent because members can be absent a Sunday or two without seeming to miss anything. They simply pick up where they left off. In this approach, one lesson is very much like the next one. Christian growth suffers.

section, you will solve most of the problems listed above. But there's more that can be done. When you focus on one lesson at a time, you may find yourself losing direction during a month of studies. Just as a single session can disintegrate into aimless actions going nowhere, so can a **series** of sessions. Unless you tie together your lesson plans in a systematic way, you can lose much the ground you gain on Sunday during the week. You can solve this problem using a unit plan.

### A Synthesis of Plans

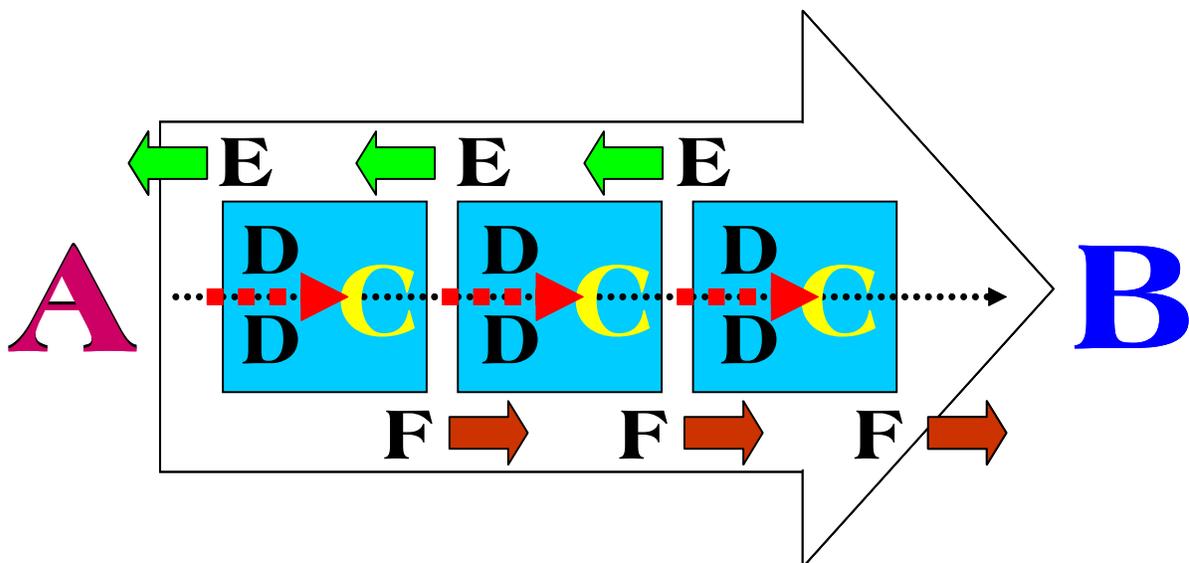
A synthesis is a mixing of things which results in something new. The color green is a synthesis of the colors blue and yellow. Glass is a synthesis of sand and heat. Nylon is a synthesis of two colorless chemicals.

A unit plan is a synthesis of several lesson plans. A unit of study may span a month's time, but three-, four-, five-, and six-session units are not uncommon. Here's how to develop a unit plan. Each lettered statement (A-F) matches the diagram below.

### *Redeem the time by merging several sessions into a single unit emphasis*

If you prepare lesson plans each week using the guidelines set out in the BIBLE STUDY

A. Before the unit begins, study all the lessons in the unit. Isolate key terms, events, concepts, and possible applications for each session.



Make a note of the main instructional targets for each session.

- B. Decide on long-term instructional goals for the unit based on the content of the study and the needs of your learners. Use the pillars of the model for ideas: thinking focus, personal focus, relating focus.
- C. Sequence the individual lesson objectives to build toward the unit objectives. Keep moving in the same direction toward your unit goals throughout the unit. "This session I'll focus on analyzing scripture. Another session may lend itself to sharing with others and removing masks. Another to building relationships, and yet another, to meeting needs."
- D. Relate your learning activities directly to the short-term lesson targets and the longer-term unit targets. Avoid the myth of "Covering the Lesson." There is more material provided in every session than you can "cover" in 30-40 minutes. Tailor your teaching to achieve your targets with the assigned content.
- E. Give attention to how you will begin a session by **reviewing** the last one.
- F. End the session by **previewing** the next one. This learning network helps reinforce what your students gain week by week.

### Benefits of a Unit Plan

What do you get for looking ahead by units rather than by sessions? Is the additional time investment worth the outcome? I believe the answer is a resounding "YES!" Here are some advantages I discovered when I coordinated my lesson plans by units.

#### *Students as teachers*

I had many more opportunities to involve my students as teachers in my class when I knew where I was going "down the road." I did this by assigning reports and projects for

them to do during the week. Then I had them share the results of their learning in class.

#### *Sessions more flexible*

Because I had several hours to accomplish my unit objectives, each session had more flexibility. I was able to vary learning activities much more than when I planned one session at a time.

#### *Gaps between sessions narrowed.*

Continuity from Sunday to Sunday was increased by using a unit plan. The Review/preview network, as well as the assignments I made to class members, helped build bridges between sessions.

#### *Self-study encouraged*

The assignments encouraged many of my students to study the Scripture on their own for the first time. They were better able to contribute in the class time because they had done their homework before coming.

#### *Routine swallowed up*

The flexibility of teaching methods and the increased interest in Bible study made our Sunday morning studies times of celebration and renewal.

#### *Attendance more consistent*

Sporadic attendance declined and regular attendance increased because learners **wanted** to be involved! The Sunday School hour became a place of discovery for them. And by the way, if you worry about average attendance, consistency of attendance among members is more important than the number of new members you make. (What is the value to you or to a new member if he does not attend?)

*"Natural" Outreach*

Our members invited their friends, members of their families, neighbors, and co-workers more readily because Sunday School was a blessing to them. It was a blessing to be shared, not a duty to be performed for the "good of an organization."

*Save time in preparation*

Though more initial time is required to map out a unit plan, over the long term I found that I was spending less time in preparation week by week. There were two basic reasons for this. First, I had an overview of where I was going for the unit. That made it easier (and quicker) to plan meaningful learning activities for each session. But more than that, I had learners do part of the preparation. So I found that I could do a better job of teaching, yet actually spend less time than before!

**A Drastic Example**

Now this all may sound very idealistic. Unreal. Unbelievable. But I tell you the truth: I've seen these results in every class that coordinated their sessions by way of a unit plan. In every class. I've seen these results in every department that had director and teachers committed to unit planning. In every department. How might these ideas find expression in the lives of real teachers? Compare the following cases.

***The Traditional William A.***

Bill is a teacher of median adults at First Church. He sits down at his desk a week before he begins teaching a new unit entitled, "People Who Knew Jesus." The unit has four sessions. Each session deals with a person who knew Jesus: Mary, His mother; Peter, the Rock; John, the Beloved; and Judas, the Traitor.

On Bill's desk are two translations of the Bible, a commentary, and his Teachers' Quarterly. He reads over the passage of scripture for session one: "Mary, the Mother of Jesus". As he reads, he jots down a possible outline for his presentation. He uses ideas from the suggested teaching plans in his Teachers' Quarterly. He checks both translations and the commentary for additional help. Gradually a lecture outline begins to emerge.

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In every department.**

---

Bill lectures his class because he has found from experience that this is the best way to explain the entire lesson in 30-40 minutes. He completes his planning for session one by writing out a general application of the passage. On Saturday evening he reviews his notes. On Sunday morning, Bill stands behind a podium in front of his class and presents the material on Mary. He finishes on time. He has been helped by members who know not to interrupt him with ques-

tions or comments.

The next evening, Bill sits down at his desk and begins reading the passages of scripture assigned for session two. His lesson format is the same. His presentation varies little from the week before. Bill feels good about his class. He enjoys his responsible post in the church. Besides, the obligation to teach forces him to study his Bible regularly and he likes the added incentive! The class likes Bill. Members of the class consider him a good teacher. He is dependable and well-prepared. He would win honors in many churches as "teacher of the year."

Evaluate Bill's approach in light of the disciplers' model. Here are some questions to help you work through the model:

How much do **learners** study the Bible?

How are the needs of learners addressed?

How does Bill encourage learners themselves to think?

How do learners share experiences and discoveries?

How does Bill strengthen relationships among learners?

In what way are the sessions **informational**?

In what way are the sessions **transformational**?

How would the same month of studies look if it were planned as a unit rather than 4 separate lessons?

### ***The Discippler James B.***

As Jim sits down at his desk to begin preparing the new unit, he scans the entire unit. He

looks for emphases that relate well to the needs of his class members. He scans each session to see how it fits into the unit frame. He jots down major events in the lives of Mary, Peter, John and Judas that highlight their relationship with the Lord. These he will use for his unit introduction in session one. He reads the suggested teaching points. Some are relevant to his class, some others are not.

He pulls out of the material those emphases that directly relate to class needs. There are three new church members in his class. They will need some background information on these three persons to understand later sessions. There is a clique beginning to form that is causing some friction within the class. He wants to use this study to focus on that problem.

After a time of prayer for the members and their needs, for his time of preparation, and for the Sunday session, Jim writes down two major objectives for this 4-week study:

(1) Learners will demonstrate their understanding of Christian relationships by developing a list of relational guidelines based on Jesus' example with Mary, Peter, John, and Judas.

(2) Learners will demonstrate their appreciation for Christian relationships by sharing with each other times they have been blessed by the kindness of Christian friends.

Jim scans his card file of learning activities that might help him accomplish these objectives. He will use lecture to build a strong information base for later learning activities. This will help the new members participate with the class. Since his goal focuses on building relationships, he needs to plan sufficient time for members to work together. This will

build bridges and soften the isolation of the clique. This will also allow the new members to join the group more easily. Some members are showing increasing interest in creative Bible study. Jim decides this might be a good unit to involve them in a special way. Here is how Jim planned his unit of study.

**Session One.** Jim uses the first session to introduce the entire unit of study. He arranges colorful posters in the room that presents some highlights of each of the four sessions. Jim prepared his lecture well and covers the major emphases of **all four sessions** in the unit. He uses a flip chart to present the material one step at a time. He writes questions on the chalkboard as they proceed through the material. The questions give him feedback on whether the learners are understanding the material. That is, how well are learners translating facts and information into usable concepts and principles?

Near the end of the session, Jim asks for four volunteers to help with a special presentation the next Sunday. Three members volunteer quickly (he expected two of them; the third is a surprise) and a fourth volunteers with some gentle encouragement. Learners are already anticipating Sunday School next week.

In closing, Jim summarizes the major events in the lives of the four persons who knew Jesus. He uses the flip chart to give visual reinforcement to his review. He recommends reading more about the individuals in their Bibles during the week. "The quarterly has a good commentary on their lives, too! This study will help you enjoy next week's presentation more." In the final prayer, Jim asks the Lord to help each of them learn the true meaning of "Christian relationship". After

class, Jim meets briefly with the four volunteers. He assigns each of them one of the four characters. He gives them some additional information on their character and a guideline for writing a personal testimony. Their assignment is to give in class next week the "personal testimony" of their assigned character. They agree to meet Wednesday evening to make final preparation for Sunday.

**Session Two.** Jim briefly reviews last Sunday's overview using the flip chart. He reviews the tie-in with the unit study using the wall posters. Then he introduces the four special guests for the morning: "Mary," "Peter," "John," and "Judas." The four make their way to the four chairs facing the class at the front. The class sits in several rows in a large semi-circle. Each gives a 5-minute personal testimony about his/her life. The focus is on Jesus: how they met Him and how He had befriended them.

When the testimonies are finished, Jim (who is sitting with the class) encourages learners to ask questions of the four. The "experts" remain at the front of the class and do most of the answering. Jim clarifies issues and emphasizes important experiences in the lives of the four. He keeps the class "on track" toward his first objective: to develop an understanding of Christian relationships. Still, he does not dominate the class discussion. He encourages learner interaction by keeping his comments brief. As class members share with each other, they make their way toward Jim's second objective.

During the last five minutes of class, Jim summarizes the basic principles of Christian relationship that they studied (session 1) with good and bad examples (session 2). He then asks "Peter" to close in prayer, asking

the Lord to “help us apply these principles of relationship in our homes, at work, and in our own class.”

**Session Three.** After opening prayer, Jim asks the class what they have discovered so far in their unit of study. Key ideas of the past two weeks are reviewed by the class. “Today we will apply some of these ideas to a fictitious biography to determine how we might reach out to others in Christian friendship.”

Jim divides the class into several groups of four. He purposely places the new members with members who will accept them and include them in the discussion. He places members of the clique in several different groups. He passes out pencils and paper, and then the biography. At the bottom of the biography are these questions:

How is this person like the four Bible characters we’ve studied?

How is he different?

Using principles we’ve studied, how do you think Jesus would befriend this person? Be specific.

Do you know anyone like the person in the biography?

How would you, as a Christian, relate to this individual?

What problems would you have in building a Christian relationship with him?

Jim has written the biography to include some characteristics that some might find objectionable. He gives the groups 15 minutes to read the biography, review their stud-

ies, and answer the questions.

He watches facial expression to detect reactions of the members: frustration, boredom, interest, fear, or discovery. He watches for members who took charge of their small groups. This might suggest leadership potential. He watches for those who say little or nothing. He makes a mental note that these need some personal encouragement. He moves around the classroom several times during the 15 minutes, answering questions, giving details or explanations as needed.

After the 15 minutes, James calls the class back together to share what they have decided about the biography. The different perspectives are obvious. Groups emphasized different traits and made diverse assumptions, which in turn colored their approach to befriending this case study man. The different perspectives of the groups expand the views of each individual group. As the groups share their answers, learners encounter new ways of relating to people, based on their Bible studies.

Jim asks members to share some of the discoveries they made concerning Christian relationship through the day’s exercise.

Do you think these problems of relationship exist in the class?

How can the class strengthen their relationships with each other?

Answers to these questions are written on the chalkboard. Jim summarizes the ideas and relate them back to the way Jesus loved the four Bible characters they had studied. Then he closes in prayer.

**Session Four.** Jim uses the first half of this session to review with the class the highlights of their unit. He uses the flip chart again to reinforce information concerning the four. He shares personal experiences he has had the past month as he tried to live by the guidelines they discussed. He invites members to share with one another what they have experienced in the way of relationships.

One of the members expresses joy in finding a “Family” with which to share. She is so thankful for her Sunday School class. Three others express appreciation for the unit of study. Not only have they studied “relationship,” but they have lived it. One of the three is a member of the clique that worried Jim.

During the last part of the session, Jim introduces the new unit of study. Just as he links sessions into units, he also links units into quarters and quarters into years. He uses preview and review to strengthen these links and stimulate recall and application over long periods of time.

### Lessons from the Example

*The creativity, participation, and imagination for this unit's success are not “givens” in Sunday School classes. The ability of a class to work in this way requires a process of discipling.* Jim has not always taught this way. But he has grown in his skills, just as his class has grown in theirs. He made Bible study relevant to his members. He encouraged the sharing of ideas and opinions. He accepted learner suggestions and questions. By planning unit by unit, he “redeemed the time” for thinking, sharing, and relating in class. The result was a loosening of the clique and the acceptance of new members as part of the “Family.”

Though most units of study do not lend

themselves to this kind of organization, our example does illustrate what Bible study can become when teachers plan on a unit, rather than an individual lesson, basis. Also, this plan does not take into consideration what happens in the department time. Some of Jim’s activities — like the symposium — would be excellent department learning experiences. But, as we will see, moving a department to this approach takes longer than moving a single teacher and class. Jim’s department has yet to catch the vision. But other teachers have noticed something happening in Jim’s class. Their own curiosity will lead them to find out what and why.

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL HOUR

The Adult Sunday School hour is usually divided into two unequal parts: the department director leads the first 15 minutes, and the teachers lead for the remainder of the hour. The Opening Assembly resembles a brief worship service: a song, an opening prayer, announcements, another song, a devotional thought, a closing prayer, and dismissal to individual classes. The “real Bible study” is done in the individual classes.

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**Redeem the time  
by building teamwork  
between department director  
and the class teachers.**

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Within this structure there is yet another dragon to be slain, and it is the most difficult to defeat. It can only be controlled by steady teamwork among the teachers and the department director. *Team* commitment is always harder to achieve than *personal* commitment. The problem to solve is fragmented

time.

## Fragmented Time

We only have an hour for Bible study on Sunday morning. Anything that moves our focus away from God's Word, and its infusion into our lives and ministries, should be removed. A fragmented Sunday School hour prevents us from redeeming the time. This fragmentation comes in three major ways: the *Double Squeeze*, *Stealing the Thunder*, and *You Do Your Thing--I'll Do Mine*.

### The Double Squeeze

The Double Squeeze eats up time at both the beginning and end of the Sunday School hour. Here's a typical scenario.



**Starts late.** It's 9:30 on Sunday morning -- time to begin. Five people sit in the Open Assembly. The director, not wanting to start until *everybody shows up*, says, "Well, let's wait a few more minutes. I know some more are coming." She stands in the door and greets folks as they come in. Time passes. 9:40...9:45...9:50. Finally, twenty-five people have gathered in the department, and she decides there's enough to start. At 9:55 she begins. (Question: What has she just taught the five people who were on time? Answer:

Don't bother).

### Activities Unrelated to Bible Study.

The director takes 15 minutes to do "department activities." Most of this time is taken up with activities unrelated to the study of the Scripture for the morning: announcements, outreach assignments and reports, and the like.

**Members leave early.** So, at 10:10 the director dismisses the department to their classes. It takes five minutes for the classes to settle down in their areas: 10:15. Then at 10:25 several members leave to get to choir or nursery duties. Since most of the Bible teaching happens in the classes, and the classes are together for such a few minutes, it is obvious that not much life-changing learning can happen. There has to be a better way to structure the hour!

### Steal the Thunder!

When directors do attempt to prepare the department for the Bible study, they sometimes "steal the thunder" of their teachers by summarizing the main points of the lesson in their devotion. This is like telling a friend the end of a mystery when you loan him the book! This doesn't happen very long. Sooner or later teachers will complain: "I prepare to teach all week long, and then you tear the heart out of my lesson in two minutes?!"

### You Do Your Thing and I'll Do Mine.

Some directors avoid this problem by giving devotions that have nothing to do with the morning's focal passage. For example, if the lesson is from Matthew, the director uses a passage from the Psalms. The two "turfs" are separated by a departmental closing prayer and a class opening prayer. This approach requires no coordinated planning by

departmental staff: the director handles the assembly and the teachers handle the classrooms.

Still, teamwork and department unity are impaired. The focus of Bible study is in the classroom alone. Learning is fragmented within the hour. Opening assembly and class time do not carry through the major teaching theme. In time, class members may stop attending the opening assembly altogether. And because the opening tends to resemble a worship service, some even skip Morning Worship and elect to get home a little early, or to the local cafeteria ahead of the rush.

### Whole hour focus

The problem of fragmented time can be overcome by planning with a “whole-hour” focus. Directors should supervise the entire Sunday School hour. They should **work with teachers** to determine the best structure for the most effective learning based on the Bible content and learner needs. The director is, in effect, a “large group” leader. The teachers are “small group” leaders. The rigid line separating a 15-minute Opening Assembly from a 45-minute Class time is replaced with a movable line dividing Large Group and Small Group learning activities. These may include songs, prayers, devotions, presenta-

tions, guest speakers, buzz groups, questions, problems, films, cassette tapes, announcements and so forth. Here are some examples of the flexibility that is produced by this approach.

#### 1. lg-SG

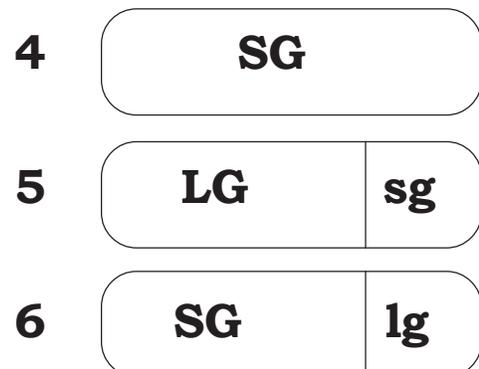
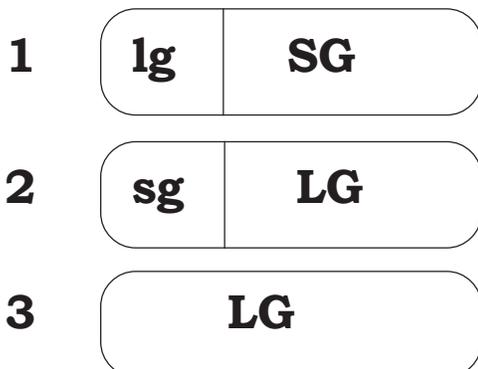
The traditional opening assembly style provides 15 minutes for large-group (department) activities and 45 minutes for small-group (class) activities. Raise questions in large group time and then study biblical answers in small group time. This pattern is used most often.

#### 2. sg-LG

In this structure, learners go to the classrooms for the first 15 minutes. Teachers raise questions in the small groups (classes). Then all the classes reassemble as a department for large-group study. This structure provides excellent opportunities to build “Family” across the whole department.

#### 3. LG only

Here, the whole department stays together for the full hour. The director, one of the teachers, or a guest speaker can lead the study. Good for unit introductions or summaries.



#### 4. SG only

In this structure, members spend the entire hour in their classes. There is no department assembly at all. This is good for building relationships and sharing more personal experiences. It enables more members to contribute to the learning experience than normally will in the larger (department) group.

#### 5. LG-sg

The Bible study is done during the large group time (45 minutes). Members then go to their classes to make personal application or discuss actions they can take during the week (15 minutes).

#### 6. SG-lg

The Bible study is done during the small group time (45 minutes). Members return to the large group to share their discoveries or to plan for departmental action based on the passage (15 minutes).

All of the traditional activities can be integrated into the whole-hour emphasis: outreach, prayer time, hymns, Scripture reading, welcoming of guests, and so forth. ***But the key to success is that these activities are tied into the main theme of the lesson and unit.***

#### Whole-hour Requirements

Defeating the Time-Eater requires an investment of time. The investment, however, costs less than the worth of the gains we make. Let's look at several types of required investments.

##### ***Must plan together***

This approach to the Sunday School requires that the department director and teachers plan together because of the increased flexibility of the time structure. Will they do this? My experience has been that this ap-

proach to planning gives a tangible focus for planning meetings. Department leaders need to decide on which of the above formats to use, what points to emphasize, what learning activities to use, and, most important of all, how to meld large group and small group parts into a single learning experience.

##### ***Must meet learners' needs***

The activities you plan, especially for the beginning of the hour, must touch needs in the learners' lives. If you don't, you will not encourage them to arrive on time. Tailor the hour to meet learner needs for learning, growing, reaching out and fellowship.

##### ***Must start "on time."***

You must begin the hour at the scheduled time in order to 'redeem the time.' This means beginning at 9:45 even if there are just a few present. Let the latecomers come into the department in the middle of something worthwhile. It's all right for people to feel that they'll miss something. It will encourage them to arrive on time. Over a period of time, the percentage of the members ready to begin on time will increase.

#### Whole-hour benefits

There are several important benefits that flow out of a whole-hour focus in planning. Here are a few of the major ones.

##### ***More time for teaching God's Word***

The hour is united, defragmented, brought together, focused. God's Word receives primary emphasis. This one hour of Bible Study each week is united around the Word, for the Word, and by the Word.

When I listen to many of my colleagues talk about Sunday School work, I get the impression that, in their minds, the Scripture is little more than an excuse to draw a crowd. That teaching the crowd is less important

than gathering it. That Bible study is less important than statistics.

Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32, NIV). He was speaking of his death by crucifixion (v.33). Still, I have noticed that when Jesus is exalted in a study of God's Word, He does draw people to Himself and to each other. Let's put less focus on gimmicks for "drawing people" and more on "lifting up the Lord." A whole-hour focus of Bible Study would help us in this endeavor.

#### *More emphasis on DOING God's Word*

The focus of the Sunday School is on **doing** the Word. This involves action: internal ministry and external missions. A whole-hour approach provides a way to do ministry and missions as a natural outgrowth of, indeed, an integral part of, the Bible study. "Outreach," "Ministry," "Missions," and "Bible Study" need not compete for time and attention. The relevant Bible study session should result in outreach, ministry, and missions. The whole-hour approach helps meld these together.

#### *Greater variety*

When director and teachers plan together, week by week, unit by unit, there is bound to be an increase in the variety of learning in the department. This is not to be interpreted as "variety just for variety's sake," but variety that increases personal interest and reduces routine.

#### *Enhances departmental unity*

The department organization was born out of the problem of large crystallized adult classes. Teachers of these large classes wielded a great deal of power within local churches. Some fifty years ago, the departmental system was established to spread

leadership out over more people: a director, and class teachers.

We seem to be moving back to individual classes. In many churches the "department" is a dispensable arrangement of the past. I believe much of the reason for the demise of the "department" has come from the fragmentation described earlier.

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**I have served as director.  
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---

But I have served a department as director. I have seen the power of large-group and small-group learning. I have seen the force of shared ministry within and among classes. The whole-hour focus does more than one large class or many isolated small classes can do alone.

#### *Builds a leadership team*

The director and the teachers can begin to work as a team with common goals when they all subscribe to a whole-hour focus. "Turf" is reduced and cooperation increased.

### Whole-hour example

A few years ago I was asked to direct an adult department. It sounded like a “dream” assignment. The department consisted of married adults (more settled than singles), aged 30 and up (young but maturing), who were students at seminary (committed, called to ministry).

#### *Set the Stage*

Before I accepted the position, I asked to meet with the five teachers in the department. A new director and established teachers: its the hardest combination in Sunday School work. When I arrived at the meeting, I found the five teachers plus 11 others present! I began the meeting with a question: “What can I do for you as your director? How can I help you do a better job?” We discussed many problems and ideas. Then the question came to me: “How can we help you succeed as a director?” It was a gift from heaven! I shared with them my vision for our department: the Model, unit planning, whole-hour teaching. “If you are not willing to do these kinds of things, then I shouldn’t be your director.” The decision was theirs. And their response was enthusiastic: “Praise the Lord! Let’s get to work!” I told the minister of education I’d take the position.

#### *The Curtain Went Up*

The first Sunday morning, I arrived at 9:15 to prepare the room and materials. At 9:30 (our starting time), **three** people had arrived. I began on time by asking one of them to pray. We shared names and a little of our backgrounds. By 9:40, **twenty** people had arrived, and I began a learning readiness activity for the class time. It was surprising to me that these seminary students had such little enthusiasm for Bible study. They seemed to drag themselves into class. I could almost hear their feet shuffling as they came in the

door. They were t-i-r-e-d. They seemed to know the members of their classes, but had little tie to fellow department members. When we dismissed to the classes at 9:50, **thirty-five** people were present. “Next Sunday morning, we’ll begin promptly at 9:30,” I said as we separated into classes.

#### *Offstage Rehearsal*

The next Wednesday night, I met with three teachers. We planned out the next unit of study together. I sent the plans we agreed on to the two teachers who were absent. (Subtle hint: “If you want to help plan what we do, you need to attend planning meetings.”)

#### *On the Road!*

The next Sunday, I began a series on the Disciplers’ Model during Opening Assembly. Over seven weeks, I covered each of the seven elements of the Model and tied it into the lesson for the day. (There were **12** people present when we began that Sunday.)

Within six weeks, average attendance had increased to about **50**. Most of these were present at 9:30. Teachers were more consistent and more enthusiastic in planning meetings. We used several of the LG/SG combinations to improve variety. It was a joy to watch this aggregation of individuals become a “Family in the Lord,” ministering to one another, reaching out to others, living out the truths we studied Sunday by Sunday.

My association with the department ended when I accepted a call to another church as their Interim Minister of Education. But the whole experience was a real blessing of ‘redeeming the time.’

## SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

### Lord, Save Us from Presumption

Neal Jones, pastor of Columbia Baptist Church, Falls Church, Virginia, once opened a Church Council meeting with a prayer I'll never forget.

Lord,  
We know that to depend on our organization to do Your work is to presume on our own abilities. We can do nothing without You.

We also know that to neglect our organization and piously depend on You to work is to presume upon Your will.

Lord, save us from presumption.  
Amen.

The circle of the Model stresses that the Holy Spirit is the One Who truly disciples our learners. How do we plan for this to happen? How do we balance our dependence on the Lord with our own efforts toward improvement?

You determine objectives and select learning activities. You study commentaries and derive explanations of scripture that are clear and concise. You create visual aids and write questions. But, without proper spiritual preparation, you will not communicate the essence of God's Word. You should not presume on our own ability to teach. Lift planning and teaching to the Lord. Neither should you presume on God to teach the class in spite of poor preparation. Prepare as if success depends solely upon you, and pray as if success depends solely on God.

### Lord, Lead Us to Prepare

How do we do this? The following proce-

dures has helped me.

#### *Begin early in the week*

The unit plan, completed at the beginning of the unit, directs the thrust of the individual study. By beginning final preparation early in the week, the Lord has many opportunities to speak through His Word to us.

#### *Ask the Lord to teach you*

Jesus said that He did not teach of Himself, but said only the words the Father gave Him (Jn 12:49). This should be our prayer as well. Open yourself to the Lord's teaching as you go through the week. Ask Him to teach you through the week.

#### *Jot down ideas as they come to mind.*

A prayerful approach to scripture makes your heart and mind sensitive to ideas, illustrations, and examples that relate to the passage. A statement by a co-worker, a cartoon in the newspaper, a news report on television, or an experience in the family can powerfully illustrate a teaching point. If these gems are not written down soon after they happen, they will be forgotten.

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*Redeem the time*  
by prayerfully preparing  
and  
consciously depending  
on the Lord

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#### *Pray for your learners*

Ask the Lord to open your learners to experiences during the week that will prepare them for the study in Sunday. Ask for guidance in planning to meet their needs through the

Bible study.

### ***Pull it together***

Set a specific time near the end of the week to finalize plans. Thursday is a good target night. By this time you should have contacted any members who are making reports in class. You know what you want to accomplish. Setting time aside on Thursday also allows plenty of time before Sunday in case of any unforeseen emergency.

### ***Review plan on Saturday***

Briefly review the teaching plan on Saturday evening. The plan is made. The pressure is off. Scripture has been applied during the week.

### ***Pray for the Sunday School session.***

Pray for your learners again, one by one. Pray for the hour on Sunday morning. Pray for guidance and insight. Ask the Lord to be "Teacher" in the class.

### ***Get a good night's rest***

One of the best things a family can do to prepare for worship on Sunday morning is to get into bed at a reasonable hour Saturday night. Get a good night's rest to insure that you have the physical stamina and mental alertness you need during class.

Preparation like this "opens the door" (Rev. 3:20) to the Lord's serendipities. Nothing thrills me more than watching a class member find the Lord as personal Savior. Or observing a learner "bloom" as gifts are discovered and used in ministry. Or sharing with the growing Family of faith. These experiences make teaching so fulfilling, so rewarding. They result from spiritual preparation that allows God to teach the class.

## **THE LONG LOOK**

We live in an instant society that is mesmerized by the "now." Buy now, pay later. Instant food. Immediate satisfaction. Tomorrow is too far away and yesterday is gone. But we are on a mission which stretches into eternity. We plant trees under whose shade we will not sit. We need to take 'the long look.'

### **Jesus' Students**

Jesus chose Twelve to be with Him. We often put those twelve on a pedestal as "supermen of faith." But any study of these Twelve shows that they were ordinary men-who followed Jesus. Let's take a look at Jesus' "class."

#### ***They were imperfect***

James and John were called "sons of thunder" (Mk 3:17) because of their short tempers. Peter, the 'Rock,' was unstable and impetuous. Thomas had a "not until I see it with my own eyes" kind of faith. Judas and Simon were political power-brokers.

#### ***They were earthly-minded***

The disciples could not get beyond the idea of a reinstated earthly kingdom, with Jesus as King. Time and again Jesus taught them that His kingdom was not of this world, but they never quite got the message. Until He died on the cross.

They focused on the material aspects of Jesus' miracles rather than on the spiritual. Food, healing, power over nature. They missed the eternal significance of the miracles for the temporal gain.

#### ***They were slow to learn***

The disciples spent three years with Jesus, the Master Teacher. He taught them as they ate, as they travelled, as they prepared for

bed. But at the end of His ministry on earth, they still could not grasp his meaning.

### *They were self-centered*

Peter said, "We have left everything to follow you" (Mk 10:28), as if to say, "What do we get out of this?"

Even after Jesus taught them about faith (Mk 4:30-32), these burley fishermen were quick to panic in the Storm (4:35ff). Notice what Jesus said? He didn't say, "Let's go out to the middle of the lake and drown." He said, "Let's go over to the other side" (v35). But they did not believe Him.

They were quick to run from the Garden when the soldiers came. Even Peter, who bragged that he would die with Jesus (Mk 14:29-31), ran from the Garden. Later, he lied about knowing Jesus to protect himself from ridicule.

### *They were uneducated and unprofessional*

They were Galileans. They were fishermen and tax collectors. They were not trained in the "better schools." What kind of potential could they possibly have? Why would any-

one bother to teach them anything? What's the point? It's a waste of time!

Why, just take a picture of this group of Galileans! Take a picture of this! Do you really think anything good can come out of a place like Galilee.

### Snapshot or Movie?

Yet Jesus saw beyond the weaknesses and liabilities of the Twelve. He saw their leadership potential, and taught them. He did not take a snapshot of the Twelve and say, "Father, I could sure make an impact for the Kingdom if Peter were just more mature! Or if James and John could control their tempers. Or if Simon the zealot could get over his politics thing."

Rather, frame by frame, like a motion picture, He moved them away from where they were toward what they were to become. These men, these learners, these unworthy students turned the world up-side-down with their teaching. They made a difference in their world that we still feel today.

### *Picture-taker or Movie-maker?*

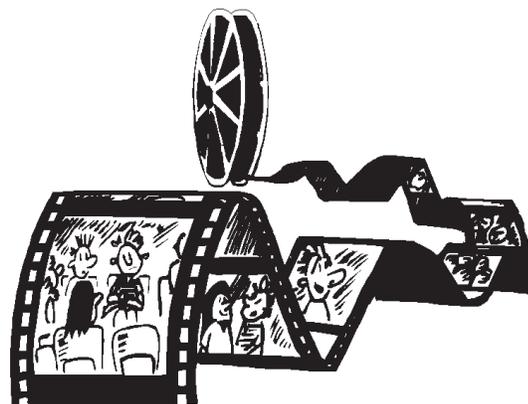
In every conference I lead, there is at least

"That's just the way we are!"



STATIC

"Growing in the Lord!"



DYNAMIC

one teacher who will say something like this. "Well, that may have worked for your classes, but you don't know **my** class. They. . ."

The teacher then proceeds to tell me why this or that aspect of the Model won't work with his class. They don't like questions. They don't want to read. They aren't interested in participating. They would never go for small group work. They just want me to "teach them the lesson." They don't have time to do projects. It's no wonder there are so many "dry bones" in our Sunday Schools. No growth. No stretching. No "equipping for works of service" (Eph 4:12). It's as if the teacher had taken a snapshot of the class in all its unteachableness. The teacher carries a mental snapshot to remind him that his class really doesn't want any more than he already gives. He ignores new ideas because none of them fit his snapshot.

What if others did this? What if a football coach took a snapshot of the team at the beginning of training camp, and then bemoaned the fact that new plays simply didn't fit the picture? A business executive and his employees? A drill sergeant and his new recruits?

No! These leaders know where they want to go. They know what kind of results they want to see. And they take steps to move their learners toward that goal. Frame by frame, like a movie, the players move and change and become what the leader sees. Sometimes changes come fast. Sometimes changes take longer. But step by step, leader and led move toward a common goal.

*Start moving, frame by frame.*

So your class won't answer questions? Why

not? What has happened in the past that has caused them to dislike questions? Were they asked factual questions that put them on the spot? Were wrong answers greeted with humiliating responses from the teacher? Were teachers more interested in showing how much they knew than in helping the class learn? What will you do to change their attitude? How can you move them away from fear and toward more openness in the class?

So your class wants you to "just teach them the lesson." Why do you think they prefer sitting and listening to participating and learning? Hearing the Word and not doing it produces fools, Jesus says. Do your learners really want to be foolish, or have they been disappointed so often that they simply don't care anymore? How can you help them care again?

Frame by frame, step by step, as in a motion picture, move your learners from where they are to where they ought to be. Disciples of Jesus. Knowers of the Word. Understanders of the Word. Doers of the Word. Masks removed. Koinonia strong. Growing in Christ. Motivated and energized by the Holy Spirit. Sensitive to people in need of love and care. In these two chapters we have described **how** to do it. Now the question is, **Will you do it?**

The problems are real, but the Master promises to make us overcomers as we yoke ourselves to Him. **His** yoke sets easily on our backs. Our ministerial burdens are light as we pull with Him in the yoke that **He** asks us to take (Mt 11:29). This is our final answer to the problem of time: Take the "long look." Plant seeds in Jesus' name. He will bring the increase. He will bring the harvest as we "grow up into Him, who is the Head, even Christ" (Eph 4:15).

## *The Disciplers' Manner*

We've established the Disciplers' Model and the Disciplers' Method.

The next step is to turn to the subject of the **leadership** of the discipler. How you lead -- whether you are a pastor, or a staff minister, or deacon, or church program director -- teaches others. Your manner of leading

others is an informal, but powerful, teaching tool. Remember the old adage, "I can't hear what you're saying because what you're doing speaks so loud"? **Chapter Three** focuses on leading that disciples your followers by analyzing the principles of leadership Jesus demonstrated as He led the twelve disciples.

## *CHAPTER SUMMARY*

The question begged answering: How do we make the most of every opportunity for Teaching That Transforms? Bible Study that Disciples? Chapter Two has presented my solution.

### **Teaching Methods**

that explain, involve, and prompt to action

### **Lesson Planning**

that produces a focused sequence:

Set Up the Target, Prime the Pump, Haul the Freight, Tie It Up in a Bow

### **Unit Planning**

that coordinates lesson plans into a long-term learning sequence

### **The Sunday School Hour**

made whole and focused around lifting up the Lord and His Word

### **Spiritual Preparation**

that allows the Lord to be the Teacher

and

### **The "Long Look"**

which patiently plants the good seeds and watches the Lord bring in the harvest.

